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ABSTRACT

Based on research conducted in Oakland, California, between 1965 and 1967, this dissertation explores some aspects of language behavior in a black working-class community. Chapter 1 deals with selected features of the code which serve to differentiate the speech community from others and compares the findings of the present study with those of researchers in other geographical areas. In chapter 2, the folk labels for some phonological, grammatical, and lexical variants are discussed in conjunction with attitudes toward these variants. Chapter 3 deals with the ethnographic description of several speech acts: signifying, marking, and loud-talking. Conclusions are then provided, references are cited, and the distribution of finite forms of "be" in a speech sample and samples of Black English sentences edited by four teenage native speakers are appended. (Author/HOD)

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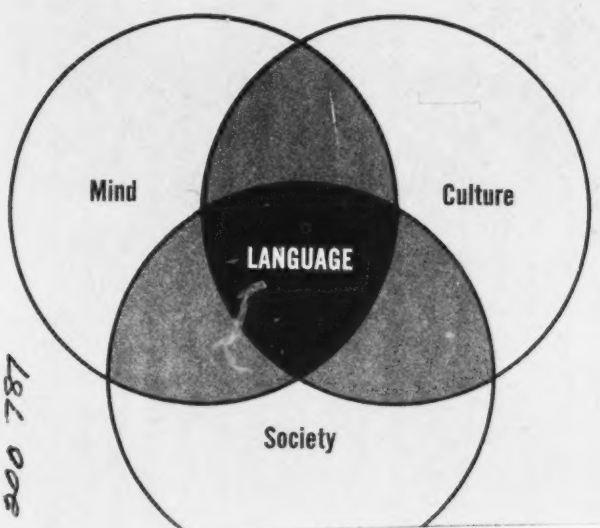
NUMBER TWO

Language Behavior in a Black Urban Community

CLAUDIA MITCHELL KERNAN



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Language Behavior in a Black Urban Community

Claudia Mitchell Kernan

Originally a dissertation submitted under the name of Claudia Mitchell in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Anthropology in the Graduate Division of the University of California, Berkeley

Monographs of the Language-Behavior Research Laboratory

Number Two

February 1971

Language Behavior in a Black Urban Community

Abstract by
Claudia I. Mitchell

This dissertation is concerned with some aspects of language behavior in a Black working-class community. It is based on research conducted in Oakland, California, primarily between the periods June-September 1965 and October 1966-August 1967.

Chapter I deals with selected features of the code which serve to differentiate the speech community from others. While there is regional variation in the speech of Black people, there are a number of features of Black English which appear with consistency across regional boundaries. The findings of the present study are compared with those of researchers in other geographical areas.

In Chapter II the folk labels for some phonological, grammatical and lexical variants are discussed in conjunction with attitudes toward these variants. The possibility that some forms of code variation stem from intracultural attitudes toward the code is explored.

Chapter III deals with the ethnographic description of several speech acts: signifying; marking; and loud-talking. Signifying has been discussed in the past, primarily in the context of Black male verbal behavior and little attempt has been made to relate this style to its wider cultural

context and to the values which are attached to it as a message form. Signifying, marking and loud-talking are linked by an element of indirection, executed in a different fashion in each case but a defining feature of each. The speech acts discussed here do not exhaust the inventory of usages and styles which are found in Black culture. Their description has been undertaken because they are little known and poorly understood outside of the Black community. The description provided here is an effort in the direction of providing an ethnography of communication for the Black community.

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PREFACE

To members of the West Oakland community who welcomed me into their homes and gave generously of their time, my sincerest thanks.

I would like to express my appreciation to Professors Brent Berlin, Susan Ervin-Tripp, John Gumperz, Paul Kay and Dan Slobin who have instructed and guided me during several years of graduate study and who have given their time generously during the preparation of this dissertation. They have been a source of stimulation and encouragement and their coun el has been invaluable. I am deeply grateful for the kind of intellectual climate and support they provided.

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INTRODUCTION

Points of Departure

It is only recently that we have begun to rethink the implications of Black American English. Traditionally, educators have been principally concerned with the relationship of the verbal ability of the Black child to scholastic performance and achievement. Research often attempted to compare the verbal performance of Black children with that of middle-class White children.

With respect to tests administered in such research, it is not surprising that scores of Black and White children differed. Standard English was used as the criterion of measurement (the native language of middle-class White children). Frequently, the non sequitur that Black children were somehow linguistically deprived, or deficient was the conclusion derived from the comparison. In such research the cultural bias of the investigation was severely underestimated.

There have been, however, important contributions to the understanding of Black American English in recent years. Many studies have been undertaken with the explicit purpose of identifying the ways in which Black English differs from Standard English. This has been done to provide educators with

information of pedagogical value. These studies have been concerned with pointing out that Black English is structured and rule governed, and not a random collection of mistakes. The most notable contribution along these lines has been the work of Labov and his associates (Labov 1968a, Vols. I & II). Their work not only deals with the structure of the language spoken by the groups studied, but treats some systems of usage in their relevant social setting.

Houston (1969) has shown how linguistic research has helped to explode such myths as: (1) the language of the disadvantaged child is deficient, (2) the disadvantaged child does not use words properly (i.e. in a rule governed way), (3) the language of the disadvantaged child does not provide him with an adequate basis for thinking, and (4) language is dispensable for the disadvantaged child who tends to communicate nonverbally in preference to verbally.

Research of this type helps to provide a more sound basis for the design of educational programs. It encourages better understanding between teacher and pupil. It promotes an informed reappraisal of the linguistic abilities of Black students.

There remains, however, a need for studies of Black verbal behavior which are more ethnographic in their orientation and methodology. Sociolinguistic analysis

in recent years has demonstrated that language offers a vast and relatively untapped reservoir of social information (cf.. Ervin-Tripp 1967; Fishman 1968; Gumperz 1964; Hymes 1964).

Focus of the Present Work

Gumperz's concept of linguistic repetoire (1964:137) -- the total linguistic resources of a speech community -- provides an excellent frame of reference to contrast two kinds of linguistic analysis: (1) the product of one kind of analysis may be the isolation and postulation of dialect and language boundaries, (2) the end result of the other may be the emergence of cultural patterns and social structure derived from linguistic data.

Each kind of analysis is concerned with the covariance of linguistic and social categories and both have variation as their central focus. The difference is one of emphasis. For example, the first type of analysis focuses on contrasts between languages. (The use of the term altering as opposed to castrating and spaying to refer to animal sterilization procedures may serve to focus on contrasts between social groups and to demarcate speech communities and their boundaries.) The second kind of analysis, however, would focus on the isolation of intra-speech community lexical alternants for such terms: their use among different speakers, and the discovery of the socially appropriate contexts for their use. This would involve a deeper investigation of the social structure of the community.

While data of social structural import is frequently implicit in the former type of study, these studies often fail to exploit their findings. The notion of repertoire emphasizes the distribution of linguistic forms within the context of the total linguistic resources of a community.

Both types of studies are needed for the Black community. The relationship of language variation to intracultural meaning is the principal focus of the present work. It has received the least attention in the literature to date.

Hymes has argued eloquently in a series of articles (1962; 1964a; 1964b; 1966; 1967) that ethnographies of communication can serve to correlate these kinds of analyses. Language variations thus become a source of social information and uncover relationships between language, society and culture. Both Gumperz and Hymes emphasize that the raw material for such studies is the distribution of linguistic forms in everyday speech. Hymes has isolated major components for such an analysis, providing an etic framework for the description of speech behavior. These components are:

Setting or Scene - including location, time and psychological setting of a speech event.

Participants or Personnel - including the speaker, hearer and audience and a description of the social roles that each may be playing as a participant in the speech event.

Ends - two types of ends are included here: ends as goals or purposes and ends as outcomes.

Art Characteristics - including both the message form and topic of the speech event.

Key - the tone, manner or spirit in which the speech act was performed.

Instrumentalities - include both channel and code. Channel may be oral, written, or some other means of transmission. Code is the language in which the speech act is performed. Varities within a language may be designated sub-codes.

Norms of Interaction and Interpretation - specific behaviors and properties that many accompany acts of speech and the shared rules for understanding of what occurs in speech acts. The notion of norms of interaction here, implicates the participants shared knowledge of their social structure, i.e., the social categories and the rules of interaction obtaining between them.

Genres - types of speech acts such as prayers, arguments, pleas, etc. (Hymes 1967:21-25)

These components provide a framework for the description of a speech act. Each of the components may have a number of culturally determined values. That is, the relevant categories of any of the components are culturally determined and must be discovered empirically. For example, the audience may be a relevant category of the component participants for certain speech acts in one culture and not in another. Moreover, certain categories of the components may be relevant to the description of one speech act in a culture and neutralized or unimportant in the description of some other speech acts within that same culture.

The categories of the components of a speech act are interrelated and may influence one another. When two or more of the categories covary, a socio-linguistic rule is

considered to be operative. Code, for example may vary with the social categories of the participants (Ferguson 1964; Gumperz 1964) or with topic (Blom and Gumperz 1964; Ervin-Tripp 1964).

Hymes (1967:25) points out it is not clear that priority should be assigned to any particular component in the sociolinguistic rules which describe such covariation. As he puts it, "So far as one can tell at present, any component may be taken as a starting point and the others viewed in relation to it. When individual societies have been well analyzed, hierarchies of precedence among components will very likely appear and be found to differ from case to case. Such differences in the hierarchy of components will then be an important part of the taxonomy of sociolinguistic systems."

Most of the studies of speech behavior to date have concentrated on the covariation of codes and the social categories of participants. Gumperz's study of code switching in India (1964),and Brown and Gilman's treatment of tu-vous (1960) exemplify these kinds of studies. Both of these studies take the relevant social categories as being the starting point and demonstrate how the code or aspects of the code vary with changes in the social categories of the interlocutors.

Different cultures or sub-cultures may vary not only

according to the primacy of a particular component in its covarying relationship with some other component, but also in the salience accorded particular components of speech acts. In a linguistic community which is bilingual or bidialectal, for example, the code in which messages are conveyed is likely to be highly salient to both members of the community and to the ethnographer. The languages spoken are likely to be named, and individual speakers who speak one or the other in particular settings identified as belonging to one or more groups.

The fact that more than one language is spoken, that various social categories of people use specific languages in certain settings when discussing particular topics with members of other social categories is a significant point of departure.

Within the language portfolio of a group, the analysis of other components is also important. The appropriate beginning point for such an investigation may be the analysis of the components which are emphasized by elaboration in a variety of speech forms. Well elaborated components comprise a basis for selection among alternants. The pattern of such selection reveals crucial social information.

Hymes (1967) notes that precedence of components

may differ from case to case and such differences may be a basis for the classification of sociolinguistic systems. Such hierarchies of precedence may not depend simply on apparent causal direction in the interrelationships between components, but also on the cultural focus (salience-emphasis) upon one or more of the components.

The artistic component is significant in Black English. The salience of consideration of the artistic characteristics of speech acts in Black English is evidenced by both the proliferation of terms which deal with aspects of verbal style, and by the common occurrence of speech acts which may be labeled by these terms. The artistic characteristics of a speech act are the characteristics that have to do with the style of the speech act, that is, with the way in which something is said rather than with such components as the topic or the interlocutors. Moreover, the very term "art" carries connotations of value or judgment of appreciation (or non-appreciation).

The speech acts which will be described here are speech acts which are given labels in Black English. The terms themselves are sometimes descriptive of the style of the speech act. A partial list of such terms is: signifying, rapping, sounding, playing the dozens, woofing, marking, loud-talking, shucking, jiving. Some of these terms are variants used in particular geographic areas. Undoubtedly, other variants exist.

We shall deal in detail below with a selected few of these speech acts and attempt to not only treat their stylistic aspects, but to relate the artistic characteristics to the other components which together comprise the speech act. We will describe the use of these speech acts, and demonstrate that concern with style and value of artistic merit on the part of speakers of Black English has an influence on other components of some speech acts. Specifically, we will show that a concern with and value of verbal art has some effect upon the form of the linguistic code in certain settings.

Value regarding verbal art in Black English is evident not only from the high frequency of occurrence of namable artistic variants, but also from the comments on such variants in ongoing conversations, including stated values regarding speech use, and judgments of the ability of particular speakers that are based upon considerations of artistic merit and style. Concern with verbal art is a dominant theme in Black culture and while these speech acts do not have style as their sole component, style is nevertheless the criterion which determines their effective use.

Design of the Analysis

In Chapter I, we will discuss some features of the code which we have labeled Black English. Attention is focused here not on those linguistic features which Black

English shares with Standard English, but on those features which differentiate the two. No attempt will be made to provide a linguistic analysis of the structural bases of these differences. The codes which are used by two speakers of Black English in the community are compared with each other, and with the findings of Labov (1968a) for the New York City groups he studied.

Chapter II examines the attitudes of speakers of Black English toward their code and toward Standard English. Positive valuation of the ability to speak well and artistically are viewed as a possible source of code variation. Linguistic insecurity generated by a situation in which native speakers of Black English are cognizant of the fact that their code differs from Standard English and is devalued for that reason, in conjunction with the positive valuation on good speech are examined in the above light. The rather superficial, as opposed to deep, differences between Standard English and Black English are viewed as a significant cause of the relative difficulty many native speakers exhibit in sorting BE and SE variants when they so desire and of the tendency for new variants to be generated at points of difference between BE and SE.

The existant intra-cultural ideological basis for the separation of BE and SE variants is examined from a number of perspectives. There tends to be great individual

variation with regard to the recognition of which variants belong to SE and which to BE. Some variants viewed from the outside as BE do not have such status in many individual idiolects. They are simply English. Code features such as these are differentially available to native speakers as code switching signals and do not comprise a coherent body of linguistic features which are uniformly drawn upon to signal code switching.

In some situations Blacks appear to be monitoring in the direction of Standard English and deleting Black English markers. In other situations, it appears that they are deliberately emphasizing their use of BE. This latter form of switching goes beyond a shift from formal to casual style. It is characterized by the use of stereotyped Black Southern usages. Some speech variants are sometimes invented on the spot, which play on areas of deviation between SE and BE so that they signal Black foremost. In such contexts, it appears that language is functioning to underline shared cultural identity or, alternately, it is serving separatist functions (cf. Garvin 1964).

Chapter III deals with the speect acts: signifying; marking; and loud-talking. Signifying is described in detail and its use is discussed. The cultural focus on verbal art is explored and its relationship to the use of signifying as a message form is discussed.

CHAPTER I

THE SPEECH COMMUNITY

1.1 Demography

The research on which this study is based was conducted in West Oakland, California, a sub-section of the city of Oakland. West Oakland comprises around 6% of the city's total area and contains some 14% of the city's total population. It is what has come to be known as a disadvantaged area characterized by substandard housing, low incomes, unemployment and underemployment. It has recently been the focus of redevelopment and educational improvement programs similar to those which are presently on the horizon in many large cities throughout the country. Of the 50,000 individuals who reside in this area 70% are non-White. In 1960 the median family income was just over $4,500.; four out of every ten families earned under $3,000 while only one out of ten earned over $7,000. Family income in nine-tenths of the area is less than $4,000. West Oakland contains some 30% of the city's welfare recipients and in 1960 close to 20% of the defined labor force was unemployed.

West Oakland is one of the oldest sections of the city; 90% of all units in this area were built prior to 1939.

Redevelopment statistics suggest that if units otherwise sound, but lacking in some or all plumbing facilities, were added to the deteriorating and delapidated categories, 46.4% of all units in West Oakland would be classified as substandard. The median rent for all occupied units is listed as $54. and the median value of owner occupied homes is $12,000.

1.2 Informants

This area was selected on the basis of its known demographic composition and no effort was made to select a sample reflecting any dimension of homogeneity, save ethnic membership. Informants were selected mainly on the basis of residential contiguity. One of the main goals of the research was to study the acquisition of communicative competence in a Black working-class community. However, child language will not be focal here. Naturally occurring pre-school play groups determined initial contacts and subsequent contacts frequently were made on the basis of information provided by the parents of these children. This information consisted only in supplying knowledge about the presence of pre-school children in particular households. In some instances, the informant was acquainted with the family; in other cases, all that was known was that there were pre-schoolers present. A sample which selects on the basis of the

presence or absence of pre-school children, is of course, age-biased. The child focus in this case, lent an additional bias. Much time was spent talking to women.

While these families constitute somewhat of a core group of informants, the data which are reported here are not exclusively derived from them. In fact, much data does not come from individuals who had a traditional kind of informant-interviewer relationship to the researcher. Some of these data were drawn from encounters with individuals in the community. For example, a woman locked out of her apartment was invited to mine and we talked for several hours while waiting for the landlord to return. Other such encounters consist of days in the park with groups of men; visits to schools, a recreation center and the beauty parlor; an hour spent with two young men skipping school, who came to my rescue and changed a flat tire; the pursuit and capture of a ten year old pick-pocket which lead to several hours of revealing conversation with four middle-aged men on the evils of ghetto life. Much information was thus gathered in situations in which opinions were expressed and information given not in an artificially induced context but as a part of naturally occurring social interaction where the researcher had varying degrees of participation and where the fact that the researcher was anything other than a young Black woman

was sometimes known, was sometimes revealed in the encounter and sometimes remained unknown.

The families in the sample ranged from welfare recipients to one family whose household head ran a small but apparently prosperous business. In retrospect, they reflected the composition of the area in both its hetereogeneous and homogeneous aspects. Some of the individuals and families had been and were being touched by the problems which although not confined to the ghetto are over represented there -- illegitimacy, alcoholism, delinquency and adult crime. The actual physical circumstances of living of the individuals in the study contrasted widely. The few owner-occupied homes were in better repair and were less overcrowded than the rentals. Many of the rentals could not be described as adequnte in any terms.

In addition to ethnic homogeneity and to some extent poverty, the individuals in this study are linked in several other ways. The Black ethnic identity of these individuals carries with it a somewhat common cultural heritage manifesting itself in values, attitudes and beliefs. Obvious examples of this cultural heritage in the behavioral realm are certain kinds of preferences in diet, dress and entertainment. Other patterns of culture emerge, in religious practices, socialization of children, family organization and composition.

The demographic statistics of this community, although depicting accurately a cluster of traits which might be labeled those comprising a lower-class poverty syndrome, do somewhat of an injustice to the social structure of the community. The problem of portraying the ghetto within the social-class model, and indeed middle-class Black communities, is resolved by a number of social scientists by the creation of bi-partite strata (cf. Frazier 1949; Drake and Cayton 1962; Bernard 1966). Some writers distinguish those who merely reside in the ghetto from those who are of its culture (Rainwater 1965). In essence, these individuals refer to the same phenomenon. Bernard sees two cultures within a culture. "The difference between them is not based on income but on ethos, not on money but on acceptance of conventional standards of behavior -- especially in relation to sex and work." (1966:28) These conventional and unconventional "strands" are represented in this community and in the present sample. Clearly this distinction does manifest itself in the tendency for interaction networks to form along these lines, although such networks not uncommonly cross other social groupings, such as the family. The dimension of life style looms large as a line of intra-cultural cleavage, but because it may cross-cut other social groups, internal division is not as discrete and bounded as the ideological basis might suggest. There is diversity of wealth, occupation and

education within the community, but it does not appear to serve as a base for a bounded intra-community middle-class nor to promote the emergence of one. In fact, a social analysis based on the family social class model might divide husband from wife, sibling from sibling, and parent from child. Rather, individuals and families are enmeshed in overlapping and complex interaction networks, few of which are composed exclusively of individuals of the same life style. It is this fluidity which gives the community its distinctive character. Recognition of this fact should not, however, obscure the great diversity of life styles which exist in the ghetto.

Cohesion arising from ethnic identity is displayed foremost at the highest structural level where it derives from opposition to the non-Black other and is supported by an existent body of folk beliefs which form a charter for the group. The phraseology of this charter encompasses in-group definitions of itself contrasting We (Blacks) and They (Whites) on a number of matters of both behavioral and ideological significance. An important emphasis of the We-They contrast is subsumed in the history of a common experience vis-à-vis the White world -- that of being victimized by White racism. Like racial prejudice on the other side, it is not necessarily born of contact with the other. It is carried by the culture.

It is also true, however, that the overwhelming majority of Blacks are not forced to rely on hearsay in this matter.

The fact that Blacks have not been integrated, assimilated and welcomed into the "melting pot" has burdened them in a number of ways so conspicuous as to require no enumeration here. Their caste history and status manifests itself in an area which has been gaining attention in recent years, that of language. There is increasing evidence to support the conclusion that there exist ethnic patterns of speech which cross and subsume regional and to some extent social class boundaries -- sppors, no doubt, excellent for tracing the patterns of inter- and intra-group relations in this country. The individuals in this sample share a language with differs from the language of the majority -- a non-standard variety of English differing from the non-standard English of some Whites as well as from Standard English.

1.3 Some features of the code

The speech of Black people in the present study exhibits a great deal of similarity to the speech of Blacks as reported by researchers in a number of geograpnical areas. In particular, the phonological and grammatical patterns which emerged in Labov's New York study closely parallel the findings of the present study. In fact, most

of the patterns found in New York are also represented in the present sample.

In this section we will briefly characterize the speech community with respect to linguistic features which appear to be highly correlated to ethnic membership and which conform to patterns which are common in Black speech in other regions.

Two areas of structural difference (1) copula deletion and (2) deletion of auxiliary have deserve attention due to the intense interest they have recently aroused. For the most part, this discussion will be restricted to areas of difference where the phonological component does not loom large as a determining factor. Because of the great similarity between our observations and those of Labov we will rely on his categories for purposes of comparison and summary.

The data used to illustrate these findings are taken from the speech of two women, Rita 23 years and Esther 26 years. Rita was born in Chicago, Illinois and Esther in Texas; however, both women have spent the major portion of their lives in the San Francisco Bay Area. Both are high school graduates who have had some schooling beyond high school; Rita has had a course or two in junior college and Esther some professional clerical training.

These two women have been selected for a number of

reasons. First of all, they in many senses represent, although they do not epitomize, the two socio-cultural "strands" mentioned above. For example, both have had children out of wedlock; Rita two and Esther one, yet these births had very different consequences for the two: Rita's children were publicly supported until her marriage, Esther's child never. Secondly, Rita's interaction network was almost exclusively intra-community. Esther had a wide range of friends and associates, many of whom were professionals, and her work and interests frequently involved interaction outside of the community as well as within. Rita was far more removed from the mainstream of American life than Esther. This was evidenced in Rita's case by a relatively narrow perspective in contrast to Esther's sophistication and wide range of interests. Their financial situations were also very different; Rita's being below poverty level and Esther's approaching middle-class. Esther, however, frequently contrasts herself with middle-class Negroes, chiefly I believe, on the basis of what she feels are their pretensions to status. Affectations tend to engender rancor on her part. She is very concerned about her children and their future. Her children do not occupy the narrow niche which tends to be characteristic of many working-class Black children. This

latter matter is not one of indifference to Rita, but she has neither the resources nor the sophistication to pursue this goal in as active a fashion as Esther.

These contrasting life styles, and their underlying affiliation with the conventional and unconventional "strands" which form a major cleavage in many Black communities, may constitute a dimension along which there are linguistic correlates. If one chooses to label relative greater conformance to Standard English, an acculturative phenomenon, the conventional "strand" is more likely to exhibit acculturation, since members appear to have somewhat more diverse and more numerous inter-community contacts. Such contacts might produce a greater pressure to conform linguistically. In addition, many of the unconventional, on a rather impressionistic basis, appear to be considerably less concerned with conforming to Standard Average American, thus being less subject to linguistic acculturation on this basis also.

The unconventional "strand" appears to be a far more creative source of the neologisms and slang which derive from the Black community and subsequently diffuse to White America. This area, in particular, seems to account for most present day linguistic borrowing from the Black community. There are far more of these expressions in Rita's speech than there are in Esther's.

There is one further reason for selecting these two women and that is that the two tapes from which the examples are drawn have been evaluated by other members of the community. Each of the women has made metalinguistic comments about the speech of the other. Ideally, all tapes in the present sample should have been subject to such evaluation. However, since many of these individuals were acquainted, such a procedure would have entailed difficulties of both a practical and ethical nature and moreover might have created strained relationships between the researcher and her informants. These two women did not know each other. The circumstances under which Rita evaluated Esther's speech were accidental. Rita had come to my apartment to pay a visit. When she arrived I was listening to the tape in question. She inquired as to who Esther was and remarked that she was a very good speaker. Esther was also listed by one of her neighbors as an example of a good speaker in a rather formal interview. Esther's evaluation of Rita's speech was contrived rather than spontaneous. Esther expressed the view that Rita sounded "... like an ordinary Negro woman. I've heard better, I've heard worse. She makes a lot of mistakes but she's not one of those real country-talkers." Both women were identified as unquestionably Black by individuals outside the community.

1.4 The collection of the data discussed

Both of the tapes to be discussed below are approximately one hour in length. The interlocutors on Rita's tape are the researcher and Rita, and the focus of conversation is child rearing. This topic served to stimulate and evoke conversation on a wide range of topics through rather free association, although controlled to a degree by this focus. Rita, while aware that a tape recorder was being used, was characteristically far less governed by its presence than many informants, and on the basis of subjective cues appeared to assess the situation as informal. The researcher evaluates the overall tone of the tape as casual, although perhaps not the speaker's most casual style. Esther's tape was recorded without her knowledge and in fact is the only recording made in the community without the knowledge and prior consent of all interlocutors. The entire context is informal; the interlocutors are Esther, her sister and the researcher. A major portion of the tape is rapid-fire spontaneous speech. The casualness of both tapes shows some variation in response to topic. The researcher would also label the latter tape as casual speech, possibly even the most casual style for this speaker.

1.5 Description of findings - Rita and Esther: Copula Deletion

The grammatical environments in which copula deletion

occurs in Rita's speech conform for the most part to the patterns discovered by Labov for his New York sample (cf. Labov 1968a:174 ff. and 1968b). Paralleling Labov's findings copula deletion occurs in Rita's speech in the following linguistic environments:

I. [_____NP]

1. He the one who had to go try pick up the peacock.
2. I say, you the one jumping up to leave, not me.
3. I think those the two typical ones they teach them, because Billy come home and be singing it.

II. [_____PA]

4. He all right!
5. I guess, you know, some people go to jail so much that when they come home they restless, you know.*
6. And Alvin, he kind of big, you know, and rough.
7. Beverly say something, he look at her like she a fool.

III. [_____Loc]

8. I say, Billy go somewhere and sit down, he in the corner pouting.
9. She at home.
10. The club on one corner and Bock is on the other.

*Invariant <u>be</u> could also occur here [they be restless]. This form does not appear in all constructions where it is semantically privileged to occur.

IV. [_____Neg]

11. And if they not heading for that they out looking out the window.

12. He say, you not gon say anything.

V. [_____V + ing]

13. I tell him to be quiet because he don't know what he talking about.

14. As soon as you hit him, he crying, they running out there to see what's wrong with him and they ready to get on your child for it.

15. I mean, he may say somethings out of place but he cleaning up behind it and you can't get mad at him.

VI. [_____gn] Reduced forms of is and are going to

16. I don't care what he say, you gon laugh.

17. I say, the next time that happen, I'mo whip his butt or you gon whip him.

18. She gon have a natural fit.

Labov lists the above constructions as environments in which finite forms of be are frequently absent in NNE. We also find that the deletion phenomenon is not a categorical rule even in these environments. We find the following sentences in the same sample in which finite forms of be are preserved in contracted or full form in environments nearly identical to those listed above.

I. [_____NP]

19. He's a packer and tha's what he mostly do, pack.

20. Brenda is kind of a problem child, in a sense.

21. He's one of those type of persons.

II. [_____PA]

22. He will get mad and he'll say M-F and everything else, you know, while he's mad.

23. I say, aw-w Mae, that girl, if you just listen to her on the phone you really believe that she's miserable there.

24. She is stubborn.

III. [_____Loc]

25. Everything you do and say, she's right there.

26. But I'm getting tired of her too cause i's everyday she's there, you know, come early and don't leave till late at night.

27. Now I can say, if I just left from the house and Ellen is outside, I say, Ellen I be back afterwhile, Suann's out here, keep your eye on her.

IV. [_____Neg]

28. And he say things to Billy that he's not old enough to understand.

29. To me, he figure, well Alvin and Joan is not my mama and daddy and they shouldn't tell me what to do.

V. [_____V + ing]

30. They love to be up in grown people face when they're talking.

31. You can sit down and work the puzzles with them and you can do anything the child is doing.

VI. [_____gn]

32. I told them they must want him to be timid like a little girl because as long as i's kids around he's gon play rough or however they're playing.

We also find that there are a number of grammatical constructions in which the copula is regularly preserved. Again, these environments are consistent with Labov's New York findings. Past tense forms of be regularly appear as copula and as auxiliaries in progressive constructions. Am exhibits no tendency toward deletion, most commonly occuring in contracted form. Be is regularly preserved in infinitive forms, in imperatives and following modals. Emphasis tends to preserve forms of be. Be is frequently present in yes-no questions. In clause-final position and in embedded questions after wh-attraction be is invariably present. Be is also present in elliptical responses. In addition contracted is appears in the constructions it is, that is and what is. (cf. Labov 1968: 177-184)

32. But he think tha's his grandmother.

33. It look just like the ground but i's sponge.

34. And she was so happy because i's hard to get the parents to participate in those activities.

Where finite forms of be [is] and [are] are privileged to occur, we find in 205 such environments that Rita deletes 56 (27%), contracts 107 (52%) and uses the full form 42 (21%) times.*

*See Appendix I for a detailed description of these environments for Rita and Esther.

Contrastively, in the 144 is-are environments in Esther's data, there are 19 (13%) deletions, 80 (56%) contractions and 45 (31%) full forms.

This distribution, for both women, does not conform to the overall pattern of Labov's New York findings, i.e., that contraction is least characteristic of Black English. While a very large proportion of the contractions in both cases are [i's, tha's] forms, contractions account for more than 50% of finite be forms for both Rita and Esther. The occurrence of full forms of is and are in these constructions leads us to reject the hypothesis that these are monomorphemic forms. (cf. Labov 1968a:180) The discrepancy here may be tied to age-group and sex differences. However, we find that pronoun subjects do tend, as reported by Labov, to produce a greater number of deletions than do other noun-phrase subjects. We find that the Labov principle relating contraction to deletion: "Wherever SE can contract, NNE can delete is and are, and vice versa; wherever SE cannot contract, NNE cannot delete is and are, and vice versa." (1968b:9) holds without exception when applied to our data.

Although Esther deletes less, contracts more and uses more full forms of be ,the two subjects contrast most with respect to the occurrence of deleted and full forms of be. This is possibly a dimension of contrast subject to eval-

uation by native speakers and may have played some role in Rita's being considered an ordinary speaker as opposed to Esther's belonging to the category good speaker. As can be seen however, Esther does delete is-are some 13% of the time and it may very well be that the deletion phenomenon is one of the least salient dimensions of evaluation for native speakers. We will have more on this point later.

There are, however, a number of other variables along which Rita's and Esther's speech contrast. Those which appear to have significance for Black speech in general will be discussed briefly below.

1.6 Auxiliary have

The deletion of auxiliary have [_____been] has been noted in a number of geographical areas (Labov 1968a; Stewart 1966; Loflin 1967) and this is a pattern which occurs in Oakland. This deletion phenomenon has lead several individuals to suggest that an underlying have is absent in Black English and to suggest that been is the perfective marker in Black English (Loflin 1967).

We find that Rita and Esther contrast in their relative proportion of have [____been] deletions. (See Table I) Rita deletes have [____been] 72% of the time while such deletion occurs in Esther's speech 60% of the time. Again, the difference is not absolute, and both women delete have

TABLE I

HAVE: Rita and Esther

	Rita		Esther	
	deleted	present	deleted	present
have + been	13	5	6	4
had + been		6		1
M + have + been		4		3
have + Vn		7		12
had + Vn		17		5
M + have + Vn		3		3
	13	42	6	28

[____been] more than 50% of the time. The presence of identical past tense and participle forms in Black speech which differ from corresponding SE forms, makes it unreliable to attempt to calculate the presence/absence of have with other verbs in the present perfect tense. However, other environments where have regularly appears are listed in Table I. They include: had + been; modal + have + been; have + other Vn; Modal + have + other Vn. With should, would and could, have is frequently realized as schwa [woulda]. In the present sample neither speaker uses the ain't negative to replace have not and has not, and have is preserved under

negation. Have is present in ellipsis [She always have (Rita)]. Esther has one possible example of be substitution for have [I's never done me any harm]. There is an equal possibility that this is contracted has. There are no questions with have in these data; however, other speech samples suggest have is preserved in questions.

1.7 Existential [i's]

Labov reports that in environments where SE speakers use the existential there is or there are, Blacks frequently use it's. The consonant cluster in this form is more often than not simplified. We find that Rita uses i's 100% of the time. The total number of such occurrences is eight.

35. And he spend most of his time over there because i's a lot of boys his age he can play with and around my mother i's nothing but one and the rest of them girls, you know.

Esther uses i's, there's and there're. There forms occurred seven times and i's three times out of ten occurrences.

1.8 Done [____Vn]

The occurrence of done replacing have [____Vn] is one of several areas where there are categorical differences in the speech of the two women. Rita uses this construction six times while Esther does not use it at all. There have been suggestions that done may not be simply have substitution but may carry the semantic idea of already.

Many BE speakers edit such constructions by replacing done with _have_.

36. I think he done gave her the rest.

37. So they just told her, well, we done did everything we can, you know.*

1.9 Labov's Be[2] or Habitual Be

A second area where there are qualitative rather than quantitative differences in Rita's and Esther's speech is the use of unconjugated _be_ in environments where SE speakers would use _am_, _is_ or _are_. Such constructions, listed below, appear in Rita's speech sixteen times. Esther never uses this construction. (See Labov 1968a and Stewart 1964 for a discussion of the semantics of this use of _be_.)

38. I tell them to eat, you know, and especially don't be talking with a mouth full of food.

39. So it be easy for him to just pour the milk in the bowl and put the cereal in there and eat it.

40. He be unconscious before long, you know.

41. Well, when he's around, like if they be outside or somewhere not in my reach and they do something wrong, well, he'll whip them.

42. Then, it be getting close to time to go home and well, they have a snack everyday and then after that the teacher read them a story.

*Rita uses _gave_ and _did_ after _had_ so these appear to be _Vn forms_.

43. Billy come home a lot of times and be singing it.

44. Her little girl be screaming and hollering.

45. Because, I mean, Suann and Billy be with me constantly.

46. And Ellen be so mad at him, you know.

47. When he get serious he be down to business, you know.

48. She get down on her knees and I don't know what she be saying.

49. But she be saying something, innocent eyes wide open.

50. Just so long it be kind of close to him.

51. If you don't get up with them, they be out looking out the window.

52. ... and most of the time the TV be on and he'll stop eating and look at television.

53. It's just that Beverly, she still be in bed sometime till one o'clock.*

1.10 Third singular -s

The rather erratic and unpredictable presence of the third singular marker has aroused speculation that the underlying rule which places -s on present tense verbs in the third singular position does not exist in BE. We find major differences in Rita's and Esther's speech in

*The notion of habitual does not completely cover the semantics of this usage. There are many cases where repeated action is not implied as in example 38.

this regard. Third singular -s regularly appears in its SE position in Esther's speech and never appears with other than third singular subjects. Rita on the other hand, uses this marker in 31 instances in its SE position, and in two cases uses it in other positions, first singular and third plural. There are 46 instances in which third singular -s is absent. There is little evidence that hyper -s involves any semantic distinction (cf. Labov 1968:167). However, it may be useful to differentiate according to age group the occurrence of hyper -s in various constructions and positions. During my pre-teen years, I recall that what might have appeared on the surface to be simply hypercorrect -s was an In peer group style in which -s was not only added to main verbs, but to modals. One heard not only, I lives, they takes, etc., but I don'ts, we shoulds, we coulds, I can'ts. I suspect that hyper -s occurring in the latter kinds of constructions will be exclusively a teen-age phenomenon and that there will be a distinction between adult and teenage use of hyper -s (cf. Labov 1968:167).

1.11 Summary

Because there is concern within the Black community regarding the use of non-standard English one is tempted to speculate about the salience of some variants, as non-standard, over others for native speakers as measured by

categorial differences as opposed to continuous variation. For example, both Rita and Esther exhibit tendencies to delete finite forms of be and have [___been]. Both use Black existential it's as opposed to SE there's, although Esther also uses there forms. In contrast, however, while the distribution of third singular -s is erratic in Rita's speech it conforms to SE patterns in Esther's speech. Rita uses the "habitual" be frequently, Esther never. Rita occasionally uses done [___Vn], Esther does not. While, as Labov suggests, done may be disappearing in Northern urban areas, the other features do not appear to be on the road to extinction. Most importantly, Rita is considered an average-poor speaker while Esther considers herself and is considered by others to be a good speaker.

One thing which immediately comes to mind is that at no time during my field work was the deletion of finite forms of be ever mentioned by members of the community as one of the "mistakes" made by Black speakers. I am led for a number of reasons to believe that this is one of the least salient ethnic markers or "mistakes" for native speakers. In contrast, habitual be and 3rd singular -s may be more salient areas of difference for native speakers. Esther, on one occasion, characterized another individual's speech by imitating her and chose to signal that the individual was a speaker of non-standard BE by using

hypercorrect -s.

While the presence of such features as those described above lend an aura of linguistic homogeneity to this speech community, the kind of individual variation described previously is not at all atypical for the community. As one moves from household to household and indeed within households one is impressed by the amount of individual variation among speakers with regard to the use of non-standard variants. Differential access to SE may account for some of this variation. Values and attitudes also play a major role. While Blacks frequently express the attitude that they prefer SE to BE, in day to day life they more often choose the speech of other Blacks as a linguistic model.

The differences between Rita and Esther's speech may also mark intra-cultural differences of some magnitude, particularly with regard to disposition toward the world external to the Black community. While there is not sufficient data in the present study to attempt to draw linguistic boundaries which co-vary with the conventional and unconventional strands mentioned early on, linguistic correlates seem likely.

It would be possible to contrast Esther's and Rita's speech along several phonological variables, however, these differences do not appear to be as major as the

grammatical variables mentioned above. It seems certain, however, that their intra-cultural statuses as *good speaker* and *average-poor speaker* are related to the presence of BE variants. Esther's speech exhibits fewer non-standard variants, and she is considered the better speaker.

CHAPTER II

THE STATUS OF BLACK ENGLISH FOR NATIVE SPEAKERS

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter we shall discuss the attitudes of speakers of Black English toward their language and the influence these attitudes may have upon the formal characteristics of the code itself. Our major points are: native speaker attitudes toward the code serve to produce a proliferation of referentially equivalent variants at points where SE and BE differ; positive valuation of Black communicative style and the unifying function served by BE tend to preserve linguistic continuity.

2.2 Variation

If we examine the total corpus of utterances produced by speakers in the Black community in question we find: (1) referentially equivalent (in a given frame) utterances are produced, some of which conform to the rules of SE and some of which do not; the non-standard utterances produced are not randomly non-standard but are characteristically Black. (2) The referentially equivalent non-standard utterances often have a number of values.

For example we find speakers producing:

Non-standard	Standard
*He handsome	*He is handsome
*He not here	*He's not here
*Don't nobody know	Nobody knows
Nobody don't know	
*Doesn't nobody know	
*Nobody doesn't know	
Nobody know	

The starred constructions were all produced by a single speaker (A in Appendix II). The other forms are suggested by A's responses when given the task of editing BE sentences. For example A changes [Can't nobody jump 40 feet] to [No one can jump 40 feet]. The different surface structures represented here for referentially equivalent utterances suggest some degree of discreteness for the language of the community in relation to Standard English. That is, speakers produce utterances which would not be produced in a SE speaking community. The patterned and regular character of the non-standard variants eliminates random performance errors as a sufficient source of explanation. The problem, as it is viewed here, is how must the "competence" of a speaker, who produces utterances such as the above, be described?

Theoretically, the observed variation might be accounted for by two underlying grammars which may the different surface structures represented in [He gon eat] and [He is going to eat] or [Don't nobody know] and [Nobody knows]. That is to say, we might represent the competence

of our speaker in much the same way as we would represent the competence of a speaker who produced such referential equivalents as [Où allez-vous] and [Where are you going]. Alternatively, it may be possible to represent the competence of the speaker with a single underlying system model.

Within this framework the kind of linguistic evidence needed to settle the issue of underlying duo-system vs. single system would consist in (a) the presence of alternations with rough referential equivalence and (b) co-occurence restrictions which limit possible combinations of alternates at different points in an utterance. According to Gumperz, "Monolingual and multi-lingual repetoires can be examined within the same general framework. They differ in internal grammatical diversity and more importantly in the co-occurrence rules. In multi-lingual repetoires, co-occurence rules tend to be more rigid. Verbal behavior seems to be neatly divided among a series of compartments: choice of an initial form commits the speaker to a particular line of approach. The monolingual repetoires, on the other hand show a greater degree of flexibility. Different types of verbal behavior seem to shade off into another." (1964:141) The discovery of co-occurence restrictions limiting possible combinations of variants would lend support to the duo-system model.

The issue of a single underlying competence versus paired competences is not one of only academic interest but could have important practical consequences. It could, for example, point to the conclusion that Black English is only superficially distinct from Standard English. In solving the linguistic problem that would lead to the above conclusion, it is necessary to consider linguistic data in conjunction with social data. We will examine two key empirical generalizations here: (1) The presence of referentially equivalent utterances; some of which conform to SE and some of which do not. (2) The presence of referentially equivalent variants within the category of Black English.

2.3 Some evidence of native speaker attitudes toward BE

Elsewhere the existence of two distinct varieties is usually reflected by the presence of folk categories, i.e., Landsmal and Riksmal (Norway) and Serbian and Croation (Yugoslavia). In both these cases the actual linguistic differences are minor, but the folk categories are nevertheless important.

The linguistic evidence accumulating in favor of Black English led the present researcher to probe the conceptual status of this category for native speakers. It soon became apparent that it was not culturally legit-

imate to speak of different systems or to pose questions about Black speech within this frame of reference. Most informants pointed out that there was no speech common to Blacks in general and noted that within their circle of friends there was great variation in the command of "good" English. A rephrasal of the query in the following form, however, elicited a shift in response: "When you're listening to the radio do you ever identify a speaker as Black or White?" Informants indicated that they commonly identified individuals who, for example, called in on local "talk shows" as Black or White on the basis of their speech. They concurred in their view that their guesses had greater probability of being correct when they labeled an individual Black since many Blacks sounded like Whites, whereas few Whites sounded like Blacks. They also felt that if they mislabeled a White person this would most likely be due to that individual's southern, as opposed to northern, regional background. Some additional evidence for a category Black speech for Black people follows:

> One afternoon during a visit with an informant, she received a telephone call. Her daughter (8 years) answered the phone and when the informant asked who was calling, the child replied, "Some White lady."

Informants found it difficult to verbalize the nature of the cues they employed in assessing the racial

membership of a speaker; they most often reported that they were able to identify speakers as Black because "They just sound different," or "They talked country, flat or used bad English."

When informants were pressed to revise their notions about Black speech in light of the evidence they had provided, they cited well-know individuals who talked proper and spoke good English. Moreover, many avowed that a more appropriate contrast would be southern vs. northern speech rather than Black vs. other.

2.4 Folk categories

For reasons to be discussed below there appears to be no labeled folk category which would coincide with the linguist's analytic category Black English or Non-standard Negro English. There are however, descriptive terms in currency (used as adjectives) which roughly correspond to these labels. Individuals refer to variants that would qualify for inclusion in BE as flat, country, bad English. The folk antonyms for non-flat, non-country speech are proper and good English.

When called upon to describe bad-country-flat speech, informants attributed to it the features of mispronouncing words, not speaking distinctly, and putting words in the wrong places. Requests for examples usually elicited

Table II

Bad-country-flat Variants

/To:m/	-	Tom	tote	-	carry
/šo/	-	sure	ah'mo	-	I'm going to
/tayd/	-	tired	I done it	-	I did it
/kɨn/	-	can	I is	-	I am
dis	-	this	he are	-	he is
dat	-	that	he be	-	he is
study	-	steady	I 'spect	-	I expect
yestiddy	-	yesterday	mouses	-	mice
zamine	-	examine	young'n	-	child
nae'n	-	not (a) one	head	-	hair
his'n	-	his	ah 'clare	-	I declare

I ain't got no mo.	I don't have any more.*
Don't aks me for none of my crayons.	Don't ask me for any of my crayons.*
He done ate up ...	He have ate up ...*

*Corrections in natural speech

short inventories of bad-country-flat forms. Since impromptu demands for examples often leave individuals at a loss, the abbreviated lists in themselves are probably not of much significance. Table II presents a composite listing of responses obtained from several informants and should provide an idea of the range of responses.

During the first several weeks of field research a number of women were questioned about *good* and *bad* speech, initially phrased, "Are some people better speakers than others?" No reference was made at this time to either the association of good with *proper* or bad with *country-flat*, nor to whatever associations might exist between these categories and the constructs SE and BE. The answers to this query were unanimously yes; attempts to elicit the basis for differentiating better speakers from poorer speakers brought the range of responses represented in Table III.

Good speakers are distinguished by their pronunciation, which is clear and distinct and they also put words in the right place. It will be remembered that it is deviation in these areas which serves as the distinctive features of *country-flat-bad English*. The responses are fairly uniform with respect to the abstract character of the folk ideas about good speech. However, they are not particularly revealing for purposes of determining how native speakers would apply the folk labels to a given utterance. Attempts to elicit models of bad and good speech (Name someone you think is a good/poor speaker) brought responses ranging from naming a personal acquaintance, some known and others unknown to the investigator, to naming well-known public figures.

Table III

What makes some people better speakers than others?

1. I don't know, they just speak better.
2. Some people speak distinctly, some have better backgrounds as far as language is concerned.
3. Some people seem to have better diction, speak more distinct. Some people have a way of making themselves understood better. Some are more articulate.
4. They speak more clearly and more distinct.
5. They use the correct words and correct usage of sentences and better pronunciation.
6. Some people know how to put their words where they belong.
7. Pronunciation.
8. They pronounce words correctly and know how to put their words where they belong.
9. They place their words correctly and their language is better.
10. Some people speak better English and use words and pronounce them correctly.
11. They pronounce words distinctly and correctly.
12. It depends on the part of the country they're from.

When Martin Luther King emerged as a member of the category <u>good speaker</u> the researcher attempted to pursue this for a number of reasons. First of all, because informants had probably been exposed to the same samples

of his speech as had the researcher and most importantly it seemed relevant to determine if, in fact, native speakers of BE would exhibit similar homogeneity in their application of the label good speaker as they had in describing good speech in the abstract. The women whose views are represented below were roughly the same age; both were high school graduates, one northern born, the other from the South, moving north in early childhood. They are also rather good friends.

Question: Do you think he's (MLK) a good speaker?

Informant: Yes. I really like to hear him talk. I don't always agree with what he's saying though.

Question: What makes him a better speaker than other people?

Informant: Oh, I don't know. For one thing, he has a very nice sounding voice. He speaks clearly and correctly. He doesn't mispronounce his words and he doesn't use bad grammar.

Question: Do you think he's a good speaker?

Informant: No!

Question: Why not?

Informant: I don't know how to explain it, but there's something about his speech that sounds too much like a "country" preacher to me. Oh, I guess you might call him a good speaker. He's not one of those "dis, dat and I is" kind of people. He expresses himself well,

you've really got to give him that. But there's something about the way he sounds that I just don't like. Do you like the way he talks?

I think he's a pretty good speaker.

Informant: I guess its a matter of opinion and I just don't go for all that "down home stuff".

Question: If you just heard his voice and didn't know him, could you tell that he was a Negro?

Informant: Couldn't you? (As if anyone could) Some people can fool you with that, but he sure isn't one of them.

If the remote possibility that the views of these two informants were formed on the basis of vastly different speech samples is dismissed, we are faced with intracultural variation in assigning speech to shared folk categories which is almost polar. The first informant believes that Martin Luther King is a good speaker; the second informant considers his speech country. The views expressed here reflect a polarization of attitudes toward speech which is not uncommon for the community as a whole. The prestige norm for the second informant would be speech which is not ethnically marked, whereas ethnic marking per se is not a criterion of poor speech for the first informant.

2.5 The relationship of the folk categories to the analytic categories

The dimensions which the native speaker employs to differentiate country-flat-bad English from proper-good English are phonology, grammar, syntax, lexicon (tote - carry) and supersegmental features such as intonation. The country-flat-bad English values along these dimensions appear to be conceptualized as a superordinate category of mistakes. The notion of grammaticality is assymetrical; the proper variants are grammatical and the country variants are ungrammatical for the native speaker. These mistakes are stigmatized usages and they comprise the content of country-flat-bad speech. The "correct" values of these usages comprise proper-good speech. The country-proper contrast emerges in response to recognition that a variant has a referential equivalent and that one of these variants is non-standard in reference to the other. Correctness from an individual perspective is based on beliefs that particular variants conform to the norms of SE, the theoretical model of proper speech. Country-flat is distinguished from bad English by some native speakers so that a given utterance may be bad English without at the same time being country. The dimension which separates the two seems to be chiefly phonological although intonation may enter. These terms are most often used interchangeably.

In order to apply the label country or proper to any

given utterance, an individual must recognize it as a stigmatized usage in the former case and in the case of applying the label proper, he must make a judgment about the utterance on the basis of what he believes to be the norms of Standard English.

The native speaker reacts to the variants:

He handsome.
He gon wash the dishes.
Don't nobody know.
I ain't had it.
Its some books on the table.

in much the same way that speakers in other communities react to:

Neither John nor Bill are bringing records.
Between you and I, he's a dishonest salesman.
There's some books on the table.
He don't have it.

He either edits the utterances or fails to notice anything peculiar about them. The editing process appears to involve the assignment of some variants to a category of mistakes. In one sense the label country might be a nominal head of a category of mistakes. It is not a label for variants which have grammatical status in another "system". The intra-cultural view of grammaticality dictates that this notion cannot be applied to country and proper as separate entities. Rather the notion of grammaticality serves as a basis for classifying variants in a single ranked system.

2.6 Co-occurrence Restrictions

We find within the speech community what might be viewed as an ideological basos for distinguishing utterances which from a native speaker perspective, differ in their conformance or non-conformance to what are felt to be grammatical rules of the English language. However, if we examine actual speech data we find the following:

Informal context: "... these are men with families that are there that are goin on the G.I., and they trying to make it, and they have to work. And they have to put so much studying in it. These the people who are really sufferin, you know."

In writing: He know how to read because he goes to school.

He said he don't but he does all the time.

Rita's data for example exhibit a characteristic variation between the presence of non-standard and standard referential equivalents. In environments where finite forms of be may be deleted it is impossible to predict their presence or absence (cf. Labov 1968b). If we examine other fixed position variants for the same speaker we find a similar kind of variation.

Non-standard	Standard
... because Billy come home and be singing it.	Suann thinks its something to write on.

He spend most of his time over there.

He makes me mad.

... he come right back and tell me.

Barbara, now she comes practically everyday.

Well, see. Billy spends (S) most of his weekends over his great aunt but he think (NS) that's his grandmother.

... out of all the kinds he have.

Well, he has a name tab...

She has (S) a morning class and a afternoon class and she have (NS) their name taped down on a piece of cardboard.

She do things that ...

She does that right now.

You was mentioning ...

... when we were coming up.

When you was in a dormitory ...

You still weren't gon tell me.

We was gon take them.

We were gonna get married.

While it might be argued that the standard variants represent dialect borrowings diachronically, synchronically this argument does not match the empirical facts from the perspective of individual idiolects. This point is best illustrated by examining data from young children who commonly exhibit similar kinds of variation.

We find the following in the data of Brigitte (three and a half years old):

Non-standard	Standard
This a A.	This is a circle.
This a whistle.	This is stuck.
What you doing?	What are you laughing at?
You a bad little girl.	You is bad.
My daddy work at the outside.	He lives by us.
It's something buzzing.	There's a home...
They was on the tree.	They were playing with the ball.

They seen (NS) the bird, saw (S) the ducks.

He have a umbrella.	He has a red jacket on.

The variable nature of these variants may be seen in sentence imitations where Brigitte does the following kinds of things.

Model	Brigitte
There isn't any more.	There isn't no more. It isn't any more.
He's not going to the party.	He's not going to the party. He not going to the party.
She does the shopping and cooking and baking.	She do the shopping and cooking.
(Natural conversation)	Why does the king have this much money.

Such variation would appear to provide substantial empirical evidence to reject a model of "paired competences"

for the speaker who produces such utterances. The data point to the absence of systematic co-occurence relations, with or without social correlates either among the different non-standard variants or between them and the standard variants with the standard variant defined as one value and any of the non-standard variants as another. Rejection of the "two system" model is consonant with Labov's results in examining the copula in BE. These show that BE copula deletion, which before analysis, seems to entail fundamental structural differences, is in fact entirely predictable from a Standard English stylistic rule, i.e., where SE contracts, BE may delete, where SE cannot contract, BE cannot delete the copula. The generalization of this finding is consonant with our results so far and shows SE and BE to be, in this respect, fundamentally the same.

Labov discovered that in actual speech many New Yorkers tend to collapse distinct phonemes into a single phonetic range. The phonetic preservation of some phonemes show a regular pattern of stylistic distribution. For any given New Yorker, the more formal the style, the greater the likelihood that the phonemes will be realized phonetically. Thus the reading style of a given speaker will exhibit less homophony between distinct phonemes than will casual speech. Labov argues, for example, that

the absence of a distinction between the vowels in bad and bed in casual speech and the preservation of the distinction in careful speech is not a reflection of co-existent phonemic systems; rather, this phenomenon must be treated as a variable within a single system. The individual who shows such alternation in New York "... is not borrowing from anyone else's dialect. This transition is characteristic of the speaker's own dialect." (1964:9)

Many grammatical variants exhibit a similar kind of oscillation between non-standard and standard referential equivalents. The fact that young children exhibit similar patterns would seem to discount dialect borrowing as a source of explanation. The interest in the non-standard variants has in the past tended to obscure the fact that standard referential equivalents are also present in BE.

While the present sample is not large enough to isolate patterns of stylistic distribution for the non-standard and standard variants in the speech community as a whole, the data suggest that one might expect to find more standard variants in careful speech than in casual speech. It should be noted, however, that patterns would have to be established for each variant. Different patterns of stylistic distribution might be expected for individuals

of different educational levels. Careful speech tends to be modelled after what are viewed as prestige norms, and as suggested early on, the community may exhibit a basic cleavage with regard to its prestige norm model. We suspect, for example, that alternations between [Don't nobody know] and [Nobody don't know] may be characteristic of casual speech whereas, [Doesn't nobody know], [Nobody doesn't know] and [Nobody knows] may be produced in careful speech when monitoring is occuring. (Labov 1964;1966)

Gumperz points out (personal communication) that the two systems model (1) fails to account for the meaningfulness of switching and (2) takes a static view of systems, treating them as absolutes. As will be argued further, Blacks feel that their code does not meet the prestige norms. Linguistic insecurity is generated by this belief and in situations where the prestige function of language is important they monitor and attempt to delete and replace non-standard variants with standard variants. Thus, any linguistic analysis which deals with linguistic differences and does not account for the distribution of variants does not account for all meaningful linguistic features in speech.

2.7 Proliferation of variants

There remains the anomaly of the wide variety of

non-standard variants. The Labov results, while showing that in areas where the linguistic variable has a single non-standard value (deletion of finite forms of be) the SE-BE difference is a superficial one, do not explain the existence of so many variables with a wide range of non-standard values. We have new data of the kind represented in Appendix II which can potentially account for the proliferation of non-standard variants. Appendix II presents the responses of four 17-18 year olds when given the task of producing proper counterparts for BE non-standard variants.

In the course of classroom conversation, a student produced the sentence [Don't nobody know]. The teacher-researcher wrote this sentence on the blackboard and the group responded by editing it in the following ways:

1. Doesn't nobody know
2. Nobody don't know
3. Nobody doesn't know
4. Nobody knows
5. No one knows

With these initial responses as inspiration the students were given the task of editing the larger series of non-standard variants which are presented in the Appendix. The model sentences were drawn from a corpus of utterances produced by Black adults in a neighboring community, augmented with utterances produced by their peers. They were instructed as follows: Listen to this

tape recorded series of sentences. If you think any of the sentences are country or bad English, rewrite them on your papers in proper-good English. If you think any sentences are good English sentences, write them on your papers as they are given.

For this small sample there is far from unanimity in the assignment of utterances to the category country-bad English; there is also variability in the rewritten proper-good English referential equivalents. The proper variants, however, are of more interest than their mere coincidence or lack of coincidence with SE referential equivalents. It appears that each individual, once he judged an utterance bad English, travelled some rather reasonable routes to get to his proper variant; routes which are moreover highly suggestive of great underlying similarity between BE and SE. In analyzing such maximally distinct variants as [Didn't nobody see it, didn't nobody hear it] Labov has shown that such sentences which appear on the surface to "... represent deep-seated differences in the organization of NNE grammar which affect meaning and the fundamental syntactic apparatus." (1968a:267) can be produced by slight adjustments in transformations used by all English speakers. The new non-standard variants produced by this group may be accounted for by incomplete transformational routes or

Lacking in numbering only

misroutes in some cases.

Most importantly the results presented in the Appendix point to a process which can account for the proliferation of BE referentially equivalent variants. This process has been referred to elsewhere as hypercorrection (Labov 1966). We prefer to use the term monitoring because within the Black community, monitoring involves both shifts to more standard variants as well as shifts to variants which are more non-standard than the usual variants. The impetus for monitoring takes one entirely into a realm of social considerations.

2.8 Values regarding language

The Black community is far from independent of the wider community of which it is a part. Its culture typically exhibits this tie and reflects its position as a segment of a larger system. Within the area of language, the Black community exhibits its link with the wider American community by granting, at least for some purposes, prestige status to the code defined by the majority culture as superior. Thus, the legitimacy of particular aspects of Black speech is on occasion. Within the Black community as well as without, some aspects of Black speech carry the stigma of illiterate and uneducated and enjoy low prestige in this connection.

Informants characteristically affirm a positive valuation of proper, good English. That this valuation is not a case of mere lip service to majority norms is witnessed in a number of behaviors such as the censure and correction of stigmatized variants:

Mother:	Give your brother some of those cookies.
Nine year old son:	I ain' got no mo.
Mother:	For goodness sakes, can't you do any better than that?
Son:	I don't have any more.

Six year old son:	She done ate up all of my potato chips. (whining)
Mother:	Done ate! She has ... have ate up all of my potato chips.

Carol (9 years):	Don't aks me for none of my crayons. You wouldn't give me none of yours.
Betty (9 years):	The word is ask! You should say, Don't ask me for any of my crayons.
Carol:	Aw, you always trying to talk sc proper. (jeeringly)

Although phonology and grammar are the most frequently mentioned areas in which BE and SE differ, it should be noted that the Language (including language use) of the Black community also exhibits divergencies. This Language has evolved its own idiomatic usages, metaphors, special

styles and languages uses which are deeply embedded in the shared experience and cultural heritage of Black people. For example, the metaphor cow-lick appears to have a different meaning in the Black community than in White communities. Several years ago I said to a friend that a mutual friend "... looks older than he really is because he's getting cowlicks." This individual felt that the sentence was semantically anomalous and upon consulting the dictionary, I discovered that a cowlick was defined as "a tuft of hair that cannot easily be made to lie flat on the head." Until that time, a cow-lick, usually plural, had meant in my idiolect a laterally receding hair line shaped somewhat like an iron. Since that time I have made enquiries in the Bay Area in Miami, Florida and in Chicago about the nature of a cowlick. I have yet to have a Black person define a cowlick as a tuft of hair which will not lie flat. In each instance it has been called the receding hair pattern referred to above. This may be an instance of a totally independent metaphor. The kind of tuft referred to in the dictionary is not a hair problem characteristic of Blacks. The idiomatic use and metaphorical extensions of bad and good in the Black community frequently have opposite meanings to their SE values. Bad [a bad suit] may be roughly glosses as very attractive and stylish. Bad and good in

the expressions bad nigger and good nigger may mean in the latter case that the Black man in question is an Uncle Tom or servile. Bad nigger almost always refers to a Black man who possesses highly valued traits such as boldness and bravery and who is never servile and crucially an individual who under no circumstances tucks his tail between his legs.

From an intra-cultural perspective, structural features such as consonant cluster simplification, etc. are only incidentally tied to the welter of other factors which serve as the distinctive features of Black Speech. That is, a speaker's conformance to SE grammar from the point of view of other Blacks does not necessarily invalidate his status as a member of the group speaking a "common language". Control of the many facets of Black speech serves to create a consciousness of kind and rapport with other Blacks. Adeptness in the matter seems to be predicated on background knowledge and skills derivable from participation in Black culture. In this respect, the Language of the community serves to promote unity among Blacks and to underline their community of interests and a point of cleavage with the relevant other who are, for many purposes, foreigners in this regard. These divergencies create a sense of estrangement because they make communication less efficient and more ambiguous

when individuals from the different speech communities come into contact who feel on these occasions that they are speaking different languages. The most striking examples which come to mind are (1) lexical items and metaphors which have different and even contrasting values such as those mentioned above (2) concepts which are expressed by different lexemes and idioms. The individual who vacillates between displays of warmth on one occasion and who is distant on others is refered to as sometimey, and occasionally fitified. The evil individual is not one who is morally bad. wicked or depraved but tends toward more open displays of hostility (not physical agression) and sulkiness than other people. (3) There is also the sensitive area of taboo vocabulary where the lexical items are shared for the most part, but appear to have vastly different privileges of occurrence. In addition there are themes which are elaborated in one system and not another, such as the folk attitude in Black culture, that different ways of talking and using language are tied to particular frames of reference. This view is put to maximum use in communicating information about social types and the social system.

Perhaps the absence of convenient ways to encode such divergencies, particularly in the area of language use, gives them an ephemeral quality and tends to keep

them out of awareness. Moreover, the kind of "specific purpose" interaction which typically obtains between Blacks and Whites may tend to such that these differences rarely become apparent. Intra-culturally, perhaps more than inter-culturally (except for taboo vocabulary) differences in language use are defined as tokens of estrangement particularly those areas which are treated under the rubric of the "hip-soul" theme. This may be due in part to the Black man's access to majority group language behavior in a wide variety of social situations via the mass media and as servants in White homes as opposed to the more restricted exposure of Whites to his intra-cultural world.

Many aspects of Black Communicative Style tend to enjoy positive valuation and as such they remain aloof from low prestige category country. Within the Black community country is commonly used as a synonym for southern. Some of the stigmatized forms such as [I declare, tote] appear to be low prestige forms because they are associated with southern usages. It is difficult to summarize the attitudes of northern-reared Blacks toward the South and southern living, however, a major feature of these attitudes is the view that southern Blacks occupy a distressingly servile status and are

further oppressed by their own lack of sophistication, "unhip-ness" and to a degree their failure to use the three M's (Mind, Mouth and Muscle) effectively. Country has non-linguistic behavioral parallels -- country-acting, country-dressing. Failure to adjust to the urban linguistic and behavioral patterns is not only non-hip and lame, it carries the additional stigma of yokel. When individuals are marked (imitated) with the intention of providing the information that they are unsophisticated southern bumpkins or ignorant, the style of the marking is exaggerated country-flat.

The researcher was witnessed the South creating such vivid images for children that the statement "Joan was born in Mississippi" was whispered as though it were "Joan was born with two heads," evoking uncontrollable giggling. Southern expressions noted by children are used to taunt other children who use them. Individuals who move North during their formative years are pressured to conform in these matters. As a nine year old informant put it, in censuring the speech of a classmate, "... its just not fit for up here." For many northern urban Blacks, the least prestigeful speech of all is speech which is defined as being southern.

Parents universally express the desire that their children speak "good" English. Just as they make judgments

about others on the basis of their speech, evaluating them favorably or unflatteringly, they recognize the importance of speech as an identity carrier and they do not predict bright futures for those who do not learn good English. The benefits likely to accrue for those who learn and speak good English are frequently expressed in terms of employment possibilities and upward mobility. Good English manages impressions favorably, in that people tend to view you as educated and intelligent whereas using bad English tends to give the impression that one is ignorant and to some degree unintelligent.

Informants report that in more formal situations in which they are trying to elicit favorable impressions, they attempt to speak as correctly as possible and when they slip and make mistakes they are embarrassed and feel foolish. The object lesson of such reports appears to be either that one should speak correctly at all times and this will obviate the possibility of errors (practice makes perfect) or that one should never attempt to "put on airs" since there is embarrassment if exposed in an affectation, while being natural serves to manage impressions favorably even in the face of errors and incorrect usages. It may be that this high positive valuation of naturalness is important in mediating the

behavioral realization of the positive valuation of good English. Affectation and phoniness are derogated qualities and to the extent that they are character attributes of an individual, that individual is held in low esteem.

In judging affectation, individuals rely on (1) behavioral expectations based on background knowledge of particular individuals and (2) expectations based on assessed conformance to the norms of a group an individual has membership in. Subjective evaluations of naturalness are made about speech very often using clues such as hypercorrections. An informant jokingly referred to a neighbor's speech in this way:

> The other day, I asked her if she wanted to ride downtown with me to pick up some things for her kids and here she goes: "Well /er/ I don't know. I'm waiting fer my husband and he might get worred if /er/ I'm not here when he gets back."

She was calling attention to the use of er as a filler rather than uh and to the occurrence of fer. In this community an r-less for would be more usual, but for would not jar a hearer. The hypercorrect fer is a source of humor and derision because it draws attention to the speaker's attempts to talk proper. The hearer feels that this kind of impression management is inappropriate contextually and the speaker's inability to produce the prestige variant even when trying causes her

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to be ridiculed.

When a speaker attempts to maintain phonological contrasts which he does not ordinarily observe, there are likely to be many ramifications in his speech, both in fluency and in the flavor of his pronunciation. For example final stops may have an unreleased quality in fluid speech rather unlike stops in isolated word pronunciation (cf. Labov 1964 for values obtained for individual lexical items in reading word lists, as opposed to their values in fluid speech). Moreover, such paralinguistic features as exaggerated lip movements may accompany words pronounced in isolation which are uncommon in fluid speech. Many informants were very attuned to such phenomena and made maximum use of these features in marking other individuals.

Marking is a style of quotation which is characterized by the repetion of the quoted individual's remarks accompaned by a mimicry of the paralinguistic features. The use of the marking style indicates that the speaker felt that all of the available information was relevant for semantic decoding. The emphasis on replication of paralinguistic features provides a metaphorical background which the speaker feels the hearer will be able to interpret because of their common culture. Given a common understanding of the metaphors, this kind of quotation is a device for reducing semantic ambiguity. It attempts

to communicate not only what the speaker said, but something about his intent and background. In the case above, the speaker called attention to the *er* filler and the hypercorrect *fer* believing that the hearer (in this case, the researcher) would interpret these forms as indicators of "trying to talk proper" and would agree that this out of context use of proper speech indicated that the speaker was affected.

Marking, however, is not limited to true imitation. A speaker may achieve the same kind of semantic disambiguation by using hyperbole or exaggerated speech styles to offer implicit, wry comment on the speaker's background, personality or intent. Individuals sometimes invent remarks to be delivered in this quotation style or use a style which is quite unlike the speaker's but which nevertheless provides the hearer with the "true" meaning of the words or a welter of comments about the individual as a social type.

The marker is not attempting to mislead the hearer, but merely to lead him, emphasizing that any utterance or message must rely on a great deal more than the surface values of words for interpretation. The way it was said is of interest because it is helpful in measuring and evaluating the speaker and looking beneath his front-stage behavior to learn something about his motivations

and intent.

Since marking comments so much on speech it is revealing of many attitudes which are rarely made explicit. Both country and proper speech are sometimes censured via marking.

Black people seem to negate or impose restrictions on their abstract valuation of good speech by censuring through ridicule proper and attempts at proper speech thus reinforcing the use of variants they claim to hold in low esteem. Such behavior which superficially appears contradictory can be resolved by demonstrating their connection with different frames of reference and communities or conflicts of interest which are symbolized and activated by these different stances.

Let us examine monitoring as a vehicle which has the potential for specifying social meaning. We might assume that the prestige function of language is neutralized in everyday linguistic interaction and that the average BE speaker does not engage in monitoring with other Blacks. Each speaker would have a normal position of any number of variants where there exists a BE/SE contrast and that this normal position would be characterized in most cases by a certain amount of oscillation between non-standard and standard referential equivalents for any given variant. Within the community some speakers will exhibit a pro-

portionately greater number of non-standard variants than other speakers. Individuals who know each other will be sensitive to each other's normal position and to shifts from that position. We might give this normal position a neutral value from the point of view of "code switching". We must at the same time realize that this value is not neutral in the sense that it is recognized as differing from the normal position in non-Black communities. Thus these normal positions underline the communities separation from non-Black communities and their internal unity (cf. Garvin 1964).

Monitoring is introduced here in order to account for certain linguistic habits in currency in the community in question. There is a tendency for fewer BE variants to appear in more formal speech. Such shifting may occur in response to different interlocutors, topics and social situations. Somewhat of a departure from this, however, is the kind of monitoring which sprinkles rather special usages in casual conversation between Blacks, particularly solidary individuals. The code of such interaction typically contains more BE variants, but the usages referred to are of two rather different kinds: (1) stereotyped Black southern usages which are in currency for the interlocutors only in such contexts and (2) rather on the spot invented forms which are somewhat of a take off on areas of deviation between SE and BE but are not the variants

which ordinarily obtain. The BE phonological component is typically exaggerated and it is clear to the interlocutors that these are not the normal usages of the speaker. Such shifting, in a sense, going beyond BE, underscores a use of code switching where the separatist function of language seems paramount.

A speaker may select to encode his relationship to a hearer by monitoring in one direction or another. His normal position carries meaning in the sense mentioned earlier, but this meaning is salient most of all when deviation obtains except when the interlocutors are unknown to each other. In the latter kinds of cases BE variants may have the effect of including an individual into the defined in-group. An individual may thus signal solidarity by using the code which marks and emphasizes his shared social identity and participation in a common culture with a hearer. Contingent upon the community of interests a speaker desires to arouse or activate, he may monitor in either direction to achieve an effect of solidarity and unity. If the speaker desires to activate solidarity with another Black he would normatively use the code which marks their shared social identity.

Gumperz has emphasized in a number of places (1964; 1966; 1967) that the presence of referential equivalents among the linguistic resources of a community is frequently

dictated by social norms which require a particular alternant. These social norms relate to the culturally meaningful ways in which social categories may be realized linguistically. If we take code variation as a point of departure the task is to determine whether and how it covaries with other components of speech events. If we examine hyper BE in this frame of reference, it contains a number of unique features. It is productive, and moreover it is quite at variance with the typical SE speakers attitudes toward language, where adherence to norms takes on an almost moralistic shade. This kind of shifting is non-casual and its impact is to underscore Black as separate.

The total inventory of phonological, grammatical, syntactic and idiomatic differences between BE and SE provide a potential resource for the encoding of social meaning. We find, however, that within the Black community code-switching is highly idiosyncratic. That is to say, the available resources do not comprise a coherent and systematic code which is drawn upon uniformly from speaker to speaker. This is especially true of the grammatical features of monitored speech. This is due in part to the tremendous variability among individuals in the community in question in their access to knowledge which would enable a speaker to assign variants to the BE and SE categories.

A speaker must recognize, for example, that [Don't nobody know] is a Black way of expressing a particular meaning rather than merely the English way. This is the kind of knowledge that characteristically varies from speaker to speaker.

We find in the sample represented in the appendix that: [He with us]→[He is with us] but [Don't nobody know] has five different variants. Thus, Black existential [it's] (SE [there's]) although a part of the total inventory of BE-SE differences is not a potential code-switching signal for two out of four speakers who feel that it is merely the English way of expressing the desired meaning. These facts may perhaps account for the existence of hyper BE monitoring such as [Us'n gon go], [I'se hongry], [I hongry] [I'se does want some], etc. These forms encode the idea of phonological and grammatical deviation but are not variants which ordinarily obtain.

This kind of variation complicates interpretation in code switching. A hearer may interpret [I'se goin] as monitoring Black, condescending or, sometimes, illiterate if the speaker is unknown. Thus, this type of code switching is governed by sensitivity to characteristics other than color. To avoid the ambiguity of monitoring Black vs. illiterate, a speaker almost always exaggerates

the phonological component to signal that the utterance is not a part of his normal competence, and the hearer ordinarily acknowledges this by laughter or responding in a similar fashion. The condescending interpretation derives from the hearers lack of disposition to accept solidarity motions from the speaker and could be the result of any number of factors.

The net effect of recognition that differences exist between BE and SE has been to engender monitoring. For whatever reasons, perhaps the absence of sufficient time depth to permit sorting, monitoring exhibits a high degree of idiolectal variation. A concomitant of monitoring is the proliferation of referential equivalents in the total linguistic resources of Blacks. This idiolectal variation is characteristic of contact situations elsewhere (cf. Gumperz 1967).

Just as speakers use BE to activate solidarity with other Blacks, when motivated by a similar objective to a White hearer a speaker may attempt to monitor in the direction of SE, deleting linguistic markers which would serve to underline their different social identities. It may be that the prestige function of language gains importance in such situations and also underlies monitoring. Given these normative expectations, a Black speaker can monitor in the direction of SE to establish social dis-

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tance to a Black hearer and communicate his lack of identification with that individual. By the same token he may use BE to include in his defined in-group some hearer who under other circumstances would be excluded. A speaker through similar means, may undersoore his conflict of interest and diverse social identity in reference to his hearer or audience. Witness the rise in the use of BE by militants on the mass media -- these individuals more often than not also control Standard English.

Monitoring in response to linguistic insecurity is uni-directional and might over a period of time eliminate altogether some BE variants. This effect is undercut because BE serves key social functions intra-culturally and continues to be used in social interaction among Blacks. Hyper monitoring reintroduces usages which are felt to be super BE and retains variants which would otherwise be eliminated, in addition to introducing new variants, some of which gain currency.

In so far as native speakers of Black English do not control all the underlying rules for the production of SE variants, monitoring produces variants such as those found in the appendix. That this occurs under more ordinary circumstances is witnessed by:

Six year old boy: She done ate up all of my potato chips.

Mother: Done ate! She has ... have ate up all of my potato chips.

2.9 The use of Standard English within the community

Proper-good English is felt by many working class Blacks to be the appropriate speech style for interaction with socially distant interlocutors and in formal rather than informal situations where the prestige function of language is important. Hence, it is viewed as a careful style. While useful in favorably managing impressions with outsiders, failure to master it results in no particular handicap or communicative problems within the Black community.

The inappropriate use of careful speech to an in-group member, for example, may find the hearer interpreting this careful speech as an index of disidentification, an attempt to maintain social distance or trying to be superior. It is in this context that "X tries to talk so proper" is used as an indictment against individuals.

Since careful speech involves a switching in the direction of SE, it is possible that attitudes toward careful speech may sometimes merge with unconscious attitudes toward SE. Given the often stated value that naturalness is highly valued while affectation is denigrated, it would appear that a good deal of social interaction in Black working class communities does not

provide opportunities where SE is likely to be practiced. These values also contribute to the maintenance of BE in the face of abstract positive valuations of SE. Some teenagers seem to attache more absolute affected valuations to proper speech, although in the following example it may be that their objections were focused on the paralinguistic features which accompanied the use of SE.

> The researcher, while serving as a consultant to a local school distinct, specifically on the matter of teaching SE to speakers of BE, was discussing school problems with four students, two male and two female, in a rather informal classroom situation. One of the young men, Bob, began discoursing at length on problems he felt the students created. He used a very careful "proper" style, marked not so much by hypercorrection as by isolated word pronunciation, accompanied by exaggerated lip movements. The other students were immediately in stitches and began hooting and shouting at the speaker. One of the girls remarked, "Aw, he trying to talk so proper."

The individuals above, 17-18 year olds, were not convinced that learning SE was going to bring them any benefits, but were ambivalent enough about the matter to have been participating in this class, devoted to learning SE, on a volunteer basis. The incident does, however, serve to underscore the kinds of social responses which may obtain when usage is felt to be inappropriate.

For many native speakers of BE, *proper* speech is appropriate for some situations but seems affected in others. *Proper* speech is based on what are felt to be the norms of SE and approaches SE to the extent of the individual's underlying competence. The absence of social factors constraining an individual to a careful style results in his natural style which may or may not be *country*. Even though country speech is abstractly devalued, it goes uncensured in most social interaction.

Some special styles and verbal art forms select for the use of BE. This also seems to be true of the elaborated lexicons of street culture and usages associated with the "hip, soul" theme. Particularly, during the teen-age years, the use of SE may carry the connotation of *lame* as well as affected.

Socialization for many Black Americans is a process during which an individual, while acquiring his culture, is also enculturated to its disadvantaged and negatively valued status for the wider culture of which he is also a part. To the extent that an aspect of Black culture is different from some corresponding aspect of Standard Average American culture, even when it enjoys normative status intraculturally, it may become stigmatized for some individuals due to their identification and desire

to participate in the wider culture. The bi-cultural status of Black Americans makes the socialization process a time when each individual attempts to find some viable personal reconciliation to cultural patterns, values and attitudes which do not cohere or intersect in any consistent fashion. Some solutions find individuals essentially submerged in things Black, rejecting outside standards and valuations across the board. Others look outward toward the wider culture and still others straddle the two, selecting from either as the needs of the moment require. Language is an important reflector of these various positions.

2.10 Summary

Given the intra-cultural ideological basis for maintaining separation between BE and SE variants, it appears that a child in the language acquisition setting is faced with a more complex problem than might on the surface be assumed.

For the age group under five, the data suggest that parents do not attempt to intervene, but rather assume that the separation of variants and elimination of some is part of the acquisition process, and that the child will accomplish this sorting on his own in much the same way that he acquires the major aspects of his language.

For the age group over five, greater pressure is brought to bear on the child to use SE variants. There is great variability across families in this matter. Regardless of whether pressure to conform to more standard usage comes from the family, children acquire the attitude that some usages are better than others and by age nine or so this attitude is firmly entrenched. Pressure for the use of SE is almost always in response to particular utterances and frequently occurs when the child is being censured for some other reason also, and the uniqueness factor dominates. It may be that the child is forced to sort the variants somewhat similar to the way the SE speaking child learns the correct values of irregular preterites. It would seem that the child might respond to these corrections by generalizing to other frames, and this probably happens. This kind of generalization, however, is made more difficult because the major input source remains mixed.

The proliferation of variants and their referential equivalence, in spite of their different surface shapes, may find the child largely ignoring these shapes in processing meaning. The mass media provide the child's most consistent SE input for the age group under five, with the schools entering for the group over five. On the surface it may appear that this SE input has not had much effect

on BE. However, this SE input has served to illuminate differences between SE and BE and is likely responsible for the generation of new variants by the process of correction. According to Labov, "No doubt the major difficulty in learning which is due to structural differences is not that the differences are so great -- but rather that they are so small. The very fine adjustments necessary to switch from NNE to SE are much more difficult than gross adjustments to a language where we have no comparable rules to modify." (1968a:337) The facts that children are frequently unaware of and ignore these structural differences, and that the differences involve no semantic misinterpretation, are especially brought to light in imitation tasks where children will frequently process a SE input and repeat a BE referential equivalent.

There are some books -- It's some books
She does the singing -- She do the singing

Labov obtained similar kinds of responses for his New York sample.

While there are no rigid co-occurrence restrictions between BE and SE variants in the community in question, we believe that this would not be the case, for example, in a middle-class Black community, where we believe such co-occurrence restrictions would exist.

Values enter as factors which further complicate the picture. The presence of linguistic differences between BE and SE serve separatist and unifying functions. At-

titudes toward careful speech as inappropriate in many intra-cultural contexts serve to maintain BE. As will be discussed below, there are verbal styles which are valued as art forms in the Black community. Many such artistic styles are not appropriately used with SE; most, in fact, select for BE. The result is that there is cultural pressure, and especially teen-age peer group pressure, to use BE in much of every day speech behavior within the Black community.

However, many of the BE variants, as well as carrying the stigma of incorrect variants, are further devalued due to the connotations of southern (un-hip by definition) they carry. It would appear that the prevailing intra-cultural pressure is in the direction of eliminating the more gross differences between SE and BE. If my experience in working with teenagers is at all indicative of new trends, it would appear that a desire for distinctness will probably serve in the future as an ideological basis for the maintenance of some differences between the language of Blacks and the language of the wider culture. But the negative valuations toward many BE variants as incorrect, southern, and illiterate, which remains pervasive, seem to point out that the new distinctness of Black speech will be different from the old.

CHAPTER III

SPEECH ACTS: SIGNIFYING, MARKING AND LOUD-TALKING

3.1 Signifying - Introduction

A number of individuals interested in Black verbal behavior have devoted attention to the "way of talking" which is known in many Black communities as signifying. (See Abrahams 1964; Kochman 1969) Signifying can be a tactic employed in game activity -- verbal dueling -- which is engaged in as an end in itself and it is signifying in this context which has been the subject of most previous analyses. Signifying, however, also refers to a way of encoding messages or meanings which involves, in most cases,an element of indirection. This kind of signifying might be best viewed as an alternative message form, selected for its artistic merit, and may occur embedded in a variety of discourse. Such signifying is not focal to the linguistic interaction in the sense that it does not define the entire speech event. While the primacy of either of these uses of the term signifying is difficult to establish, the latter deserves attention due to its neglect in the literature.

According to Abrahams, signifying "... can mean any

number of things; in the case of the toast,* it certainly refers to the monkey's ability to talk with great innuendo, to carp, cajole, needle and lie. It can mean in other instances the propensity to talk around a subject, never quite coming to the point. It can mean 'making fun' of a person or situation. Also it can denote speaking with the hands and eyes, and in this respect encompasses a whole complex of expressions and gestures. Thus it is 'signifying' to stir up a fight between neighbors by telling stories; it is signifying to make fun of the police by parodying his motions behind his back, it is signifying to ask for a piece of cake by saying, 'My brother needs a piece of that cake.' It is, in other words, many facets of the smart-alecky attitude." (Abrahams 1964:54). While the present researcher never obtained consensus from informants in their definition of signifying, most informants felt that some element of indirection was criterial to signifying and many would label the parodying of the policeman's motions marking and the request for cake shucking, in the examples above.

Kochman differentiates two forms of signifying and classifies them in terms of their function: "When the function of signifying is directive the tactic employed is indirection, i.e., the signifier reports or repeats

*See Abrahams for texts

what someone else has said about the listener; the "report" is couched in plausible language designed to compel belief and arouse feelings of anger and hostility. There is also the implication that if the listener fails to do anything about it -- what has to be done is usually quite clear -- his status will be seriously compromised." "... when the function of signifying is to arouse feelings of embarrassment, shame, frustration, or futility, to diminish someone's status, the tactic employed is direct in the form of a taunt ..." (Kochman 1969:32)

Kochman reports that signifying and sounding are used interchangeably in the Chicago area. One male Oakland informant frequently used these terms interchangeably. Most others, however, referred to the direct taunts which Kochman suggests are the formal features of signifying, when its function is to arouse emotions in the absence of directive intent, as sounding or woofing.

One informant suggested that only when direct insults were attributed to a third party could they be considered signifying. As a child in the Chicago area, my age group treated signifying and sounding as contrasting terms, and it may be that the collapse of this distinction is of recent vintage. Signifying at that time was a fairly standard tactic which was employed in

sounding (as a verbal insult game). That is, the speech event sounding could involve either direct insults sounds or signifying, indirect insults, but they were mutually exclusive tactics. Closely related was the activity of "playing the dozens" which then involved broadening the target of the insults to include derogatory remarks about the family of the addressee, particularly his mother. In playing the dozens, one could either "sound on" the addressee's ancestors or "signify" about them. Sounding and playing the dozens categorically involve verbal insult (typically joking behavior); signi- does not. It may be that what these folk categories have in common has obscured what are felt by many to have crucial differences and, moreover, functions which are more diverse than have been assumed.

It should also be noted that the composition of the present sample differs from the samples of both Kochman and Abrahams. The latter two are weighed heavily in favor of male informants and the present favors female informants. This factor of composition, particularly the sex of informants is important, due to the much greater likelihood of males to engage in signifying, sounding and playing the dozens as a speech event. There is a marked tendency for such activity to be far more typical of certain age-groups than others. These factors

potentially add a slant to interpretation, particularly because the insult dimension looms large in contexts where verbal dueling is focal.

In lieu of attempting to precisely define what is meant by the term signifying in the Black community we will proceed by way of analogy to inform the reader of various meanings of the term as it is applied in interpretation.

The Standard English concept of signifying seems etymologically related to the use of this term within the Black community. An audience, for example, may be advised to signify "yes" by standing or to signify its disapproval or permissive education by saying "aye". It is also possible to say that an individual signified his poverty by wearing rags. In the first instance we explicitly state the relationship between the meaning and the act, informing the audience that in this context the action or word will be an adequate and acceptable means of expressing approval. In the second instance the relationship between rags and poverty is implicit and stems from conventional associations. It is in this latter sense that SE usage and Black usage have most in common.

In the context of news analyses and interpretation we hear the rhetorical question, "What does all of this

signify?" Individuals posing this question proceed to tell us what some words or events mean by placing major emphasis on the implications of the thing which is the subject of interpretation and, more often than not, posing inferences which are felt to logically follow. Such interpretations rely on the establishment of context which may include antecedent conditions and background knowledge as well as the context in which the event occurred.

Within the political arena we accept such interpretations as natural and tend to feel that they serve to foster understanding of phenomena which might otherwise pose difficulties. We tend to enjoy a common competence at one level of decoding meaning, that is, we can supply dictionary entries for words in sentences and, dependent upon their arrangement, we arrive at a kind of interretation of meaning. When we use the term meaning in reference to analyses offered by Severeid or Reston we refer to the signification or significance of the words of our leaders they supply. Signified meaning in the Black sense has much in common with these kinds of interpretations.

The Black concept of signifying incorporates essentially a folk notion that dictionary entries for words are not always sufficient for interpreting meanings or

messages, or that meaning goes beyond such interpretations. Complimentary remarks may be delivered in a left-handed fashion. A particular utterance may be an insult in one context and not another. What pretends to be informative may intend to be persuasive. Superficially self-abasing remarks are frequently self-praise. The hearer is thus constrained to attend to all potential meaning carrying symbolic systems in speech events -- the total universe of discourse. The context embeddedness of meaning is attested to by both our reliance on the given context and, most importantly, by our inclination to construct additional context from our background knowledge of the world. Facial expression and tone of voice serve to orient us to one kind of interpretation rather than another. Situational context helps us to narrow meaning. Personal background knowledge about the speaker points us in different directions. Expectations based on role or status criteria enter into the sorting process. In fact, we seem to process all manner of information against a background of assumptions and expectations. Thus, no matter how sincere the tone of voice affected by the used car salesman, he is always suspect.

When Lady Bracknell, in Wilde's "The Importance of Being Earnest," expresses disapproval of Jack Worthing's

ward, he says:

> "Miss Cardew is the grand-daughter of the late Mr. Thomas Cardew of 149 Belgrave Square, S.W.; Gervase Park, Dorking, Surrey; and the Sporran Fifeshire."

It is clear to the audience that it is not Worthing's intent to supply addresses to this snobbish lady. We do not expect her to record this information, rather we interpret the presentation of this information as a way of saying, "Miss Cardew is your status equal."

This kind of interpretation of meaning parallels and is typical of the kind of meaning which is extracted in the process of decoding signified messages. Such seemingly renegade interpretations of meaning are commonplace,and the fact that many are public, that is, we may obtain consensus on these meanings across individuals, suggests that they are not so heretical as they might appear to be.

3.2 More formalfeatures of signifying

Labeling a particular utterance signifying involves the recognition and attribution of some implicit content or function, which is potentially obscured by the surface content or function. The obscurity may lie in the relative difficult it poses for interpreting (1) the meaning or message the speaker is adjudged as intending to convey; (2) the addressee -- the person or persons to whom the

message is directed; (3) the goal orientation or intent of the speaker. A precondition for the application of the term signifying to some speech act is the assumption that the meaning decoded was consciously and purposely formulated at the encoding stage. In reference to function the same condition must hold.

3.3 Some examples of signifying with accompanying explanations

The present section will be devoted to the presentation of a series of examples of speech acts which are labeled signifying in the community in question. The examples will be followed by interpretations which are intended to clarify the messages and meanings which are being conveyed in each case.

(1) The interlocutors here are Barbara, an informant, Mary, one of her friends and the researcher. The conversation takes place in Barbara's home and the episode begins as I am about to leave.

Barbara: What are going to do Saturday? Will you be over here?

R: I don't know.

Barbara: Well, if you're not going to be doing anything, come by. I'm going to cook some chit'lins. (rather jokingly) Or are you one of those Negroes who don't eat chit'lins?

Mary: (interjecting indignantly) That's all I hear lately -- soul food, soul food. If you say you don't eat it you get accused of being saditty (affected, considering oneself superior).

(Matter of factly) Well, I ate enough black-eyed peas and neckbones during the depression that I can't get too excited over it. I eat prime rib and T-bone because I like to, not because I'm trying to be White. (Sincerely) Negroes are constantly trying to find some way to discriminate against each other. If they could once get it in their heads that we are all in this together maybe we could get somewhere in this battle against the man.

[Mary leaves]

Barbara: Well, I wasn't signifying at her, but like I always say, if the shoe fits, wear it.

While the manifest topic of Barbara's question was food, Mary's response indicates that this is not a conversation about the relative merits of having one thing or another for dinner. Briefly, Barbara was, in the metaphors of the culture, implying that Mary (and/or I) were assimilationists.

First of all, let us deal with the message itself, which is somewhat analogous to an allegory in that the significance or meaning of the words must be derived from known symbolic values. An outsider or non-member (perhaps not at this date) might find it difficult to grasp the significance of eating chit'lins or not eating chit'lins. Barbara's "one of those Negroes that" places the hearer in a category of persons which, in turn, suggests that the members of that category may share other features, in this

case, negatively evaluated ones, and indicates that there is something here of greater significance than mere dietary preference.

Chit'lins are considered a delicacy by many Black people and eating chit'lins is often viewed as a traditional dietary habit of Black people. Changes in such habits are viewed as gratuitous aping of Whites and are considered to imply derogation of these customs. The same sort of sentiment often attaches to other behaviors such as changes in church affiliation of upwardly mobile Blacks. Thus, not eating or liking chit'lins may be indicative of assimilationist attitudes, which in turn imply a rejection of one's Black brothers and sisters. It is perhaps no longer necessary to mention that assimilation is far from a neutral term intra-culturally. Blacks have traditionally shown ambivalence toward the abandonment of ethnic heritage. Many strong attitudes attached to certain kinds of cultural behavior seem to reflect a fear of cultural extermination.

It is not clear at the outset to whom the accusation of being an assimilationist was aimed. Ostensibly, Barbara addressed her remarks to me. Yet Mary's seems to indicate that she felt herself to be the real addressee in this instance. The signifier may employ the tactic of obscuring his addressee as part of his strategy. In the

following case the remark is, on the surface, directed toward no one in particular.

(2) I saw a woman the other day in a pair of stretch pants, she must have weighed 300 pounds. If she knew how she looked she would burn those things.

Such a remark may have particular significance to the 235 pound member of the audience who is frequently seen about town in stretch pants. She is likely to interpret this remark as directed at her, with the intent of providing her with the information that she looks singularly unattractive so attired.

The technique is fairly straightforward, the speaker simply selects a topic which is selectively relevant to his audience. A speaker who has a captive audience, such as a minister, may be accused of *signifying* by virtue of his text being too timely and selectively *à propos* to segments of his audience.

It might be proposed that Mary intervened in the hope of rescuing me from a dilemma, by asserting the absence of any necessary relationships between dietary habits and assimilationist attitudes. However, Barbara's further remarks lend credence to the original hypothesis, and suggest that Mary was correct in her interpretation, that she was the target of the insinuation.

Barbara: I guess she was saying all that for your benefit. At least, I hope she wasn't trying to fool me. If she weren't so worried about keeping up with her saditty friends, she would eat less T-bone steak and buy some shoes for her kids once in a while.

Although Mary never explicitly accuses Barbara of signifying, her response seems tantamount to such an accusation as is evidenced by Barbara's denial. Mary's indignation registers quite accurately the spirit in which some signifying is taken. This brings us to another feature of signifying: the message often carries some negative import for the addressee. Mary's response deserves note. Her retaliation also involves signifying. While talking about obstacles to brotherhood she intimates that behavior such as that engaged in by Barbara is typical of artificially induced sources of schism which are in essence superficial in their focus, and which, in turn, might be viewed as a comment on the character of the individual who introduces divisiveness on such trivial grounds.

Barbara insulted Mary, her motive perhaps being to injure her feelings or lower her self-esteem. An informant asked to interpret this interchange went father in imputing motives by suggesting possible reasons for Barbara's behavior. He said that the answer was buried in the past. Perhaps Barbara was repaying Mary for some

insult of the past, settling a score, as it were. He suggested that Barbara's goal was to raise her own self esteem by asserting superiority of a sort over Mary. Moreover, he said that this kind of interchange was probably symptomatic of the relationship between the two women and that one could expect to find them jockeying for position on any number of issues. "Barbara was trying to rank Mary" to put her down by typing her. This individual seemed to be defining the function of signifying as the establishment of dominance in this case.

Terry Southern narrates an excellent example of this allegorical kind of signifying message form in the anthology "Red Dirt Marijuana." Here we find two brothers signifying at each other in an altercation leading to a razor duel in which both men are killed. One of the brothers, C.K. tells the following story:

(3) C.K.: "There was these two boys from Fort Worth, they was over in Paris, France, and with the Army, and they was standin' on the corner without much in partic'lar to do when a couple of o-fay chicks come strollin' by, you know what I mean, a couple of nice French gals--and they was very nice indeed with the exception that one of them appeared to be considerable older than the other one, like she might be the great grandmother of the other one or somethin' like that, you see. So these boys was diggin' these chicks and one of them say: 'Man, let's make a move, I believe we do awright there! And the other one say: 'Well, now, similar thought occurred to me as well, but .. er .. uh .. how is we goin decide who takes the

> grandmother? I don't want no old bitch like that!' So the other one say: 'How we decide? Why man, I goin take the grandmother! I the one see these chicks first, and I gets to take my choice!' So the other one say: 'Well, now you talking!' You gets the grandmother, and I gets the young one-- that's fine! But tell me this, boy,--how comes you wants the old lady, instead of the fine young gal? So the other one say: 'Why, don't you know? Ain't you with it? She been white ... LON-GER!

Big Nail: You ain't change much, is you boy?

This story was not told for its pure entertainment value. C.K.'s message to Big Nail was that the fellow who preferred the grandmother was his allegorical counterpart. This alleged social type is the target of some ethnic humor and has been explored particular by Cleaver in his book, "Soul on Ice." Such an allegation would be considered a deep insult by many.

The preceding messages are indirect not because they are cryptic (i.e., difficult to decode), but because they somehow force the hearer to take additional steps. To understand the significance of not eating chit'lins or a yen for a grandmotherly white woman, one must voyage to the social world and discover the characteristics of these social types and cultural values and attitudes toward them.

The indirect message may take any number of forms, however, as in the following example.

(4) The relevant background information lacking in this interchange is that the husband is a member of the

class of individuals who do not wear suits to work.

Wife: Where are you going?

Husband: I'm going to work.

Wife: (You're wearing) a suit, tie and white shirt? You didn't tell me you got a promotion.

The wife, in this case, is examining the truth value of her husband's assertion (A) I'm going to work., by stating the obvious truth that (B) he is wearing a suit. Implicit is the inappropriateness of this dress as measured against shared background knowledge. In order to account for this discrepancy, she advances the hypothesis (C) he has received a promotion and is now a member of the class of people who wear suits to work. (B) is obviously true and if (C) is not true then (A) must also be false. Having no reason to suspect that (C) is true, she is <u>signifying</u> that he is not going to work, moreover, he is lying about his destination.

Now the wife could have chosen a more straight-forward way of finding an acceptable reason for her husband's unusual attire. She might have asked, for example, "Why are you wearing a suit?" And he could have pleaded some unusual circumstances. Her choice to entrap him suggests that she was not really seeking information but more than likely already had some answers in mind. While it seems reasonable to conclude that an accusation of lying is im-

plicit in the interchange, and one would guess that the wife's intent is equally apparent to the husband, this accusation is never made explicit. This brings us to some latent advantages of indirect messages, especially those with negative import for the receiver. Such messages, because of their form -- they contain both explicit and implicit content -- structure interpretation in such a way that the parties have the option of avoiding a real confrontation (cf. Brown 1958:314 for a similar discussion). Alternately, they provoke confrontations without at the same time exposing unequivocally the speaker's intent. The advantage in either case is for the speaker because it gives him control of the situation at the receiver's expense. The speaker, because of the purposeful ambiguity of his original remark, reserves the right to subsequently insist on the harmless interpretation rather than the provocative one. When the situation is such that there is no ambiguity in determining the addressee, the addressee faces the possibility that if he attempts to confront the speaker, the latter will deny the message or intent imputed, leaving him in the embarrassing predicament of appearing contentious.

Picture, if you will, the secretary who has become uneasy about the tendency of her knee to come into contact with the hand of her middle-aged boss. She finally decides

to confront him and indignantly informs him that she is not that kind of a girl. He responds by feigning hurt innocence, "How could you accuse me of such a thing?" If his innocence is genuine, her misconstrual of the significance of these occasions of body contact possibly comments on her character more than his. She has no way of being certain and she feels foolish. Now a secretary skilled in the art of signifying could have avoided the possibility of "having the tables turned" by saying, "Oh, excuse me Mr. Smith, I didn't mean to get my knee in your way." He would have surely understood her message if he were guilty and a confrontation would have been avoided. If he were innocent, the remark would have probably been of no consequence.

When there is some ambiguity with reference to the addressee, as in the first example, the hearer must expose himself as the target before the confrontation can take place. The speaker still has the option of retreating and the opportunity, while feigning innocence, to jibe, "Well, if the shoe fits, wear it."

The individual who has a well-know reputation for this kind of signifying is felt to be sly and, sometimes, not man or woman enough to come out and say what he means.

Signifying does not, however, always have negative valuations attached to it; it is clearly thought of as a kind of art -- a clever way of conveying messages. In

fact, it does not lose its artistic merit even when it is malicious. It takes some skill to construct messages with multi-level meanings, and it sometimes takes equal expertise in unravelling the puzzle presented in all of its many implications. Just as in certain circles the clever punster derives satisfaction and is rewarded by his hearers for constructing a multi-sided pun, the signifier is also rewarded for his cleverness.

The next example was reported by an informant to illustrate the absence of negative import as a criterial feature of signifying.

(5) After I had my little boy, I swore I was not having any more babies. I thought four kids was a nice sized family. But it didn't turn out that way. I was a little bit disgusted and didn't tell anybody when I discovered I was pregnant. My sister came over one day and I had started to show by that time.

Rochelle: Girl, you sure do need to join the Metrecal for lunch bunch.

Grace: (non-commitally) Yea, I guess I am putting on a little weight.

Rochelle: Now look here, girl, we both standing here soaking wet and you still trying to tell me it ain't raining.

Grace found the incident highly amusing. She reports the incident to illustrate Rochelle's clever use of words, the latter's intent being simply to let her know in a humorous way that she was aware of her pregnancy.

"She was teasing--being funny." Such messages may include content which might be construed as mildly insulting except that they are treated by the interlocutors as joking behavior.

(6) What a lovely coat, they sure don't make coats like that any more. (Glossed: Your coat is out of style).

(7) You must be going to the Ritz this afternoon. (Glossed: You're looking tacky).

(8) The following interchange took place in a public park. Three young men in their early twenties sat down with the researcher, one of whom initiated a conversation in this way:

I: Mama, you sho is fine.

R: That ain no way to talk to your mother.

(laughter)

I: You married?

R: Um hm.

I: Is your husband married?

(laughter)

R: Very.

(The conversation continues with the same young man doing most of the talking. He questions me about what I am doing and I tell him about my research project. After a couple of minutes of discussing 'rapping' I returns to his original style.)

I: Baby, you a real scholar. I can tell you want to learn. Now if you'll just cooperate a li'l bit, I'll show you want a good teacher I am. But first we got to get into my area of expertise.

R: I may be wrong but seems to me we already in your area of expertise.

(laughter)

I: You ain' so bad yourself, girl. I ain't heard you stutter yet. You a li'l fixated on your subject though. I want to help a sweet thang like you all I can. I figure all that book learning you got must mean you been neglecting other areas of your education.

II: Talk that talk! (Gloss: Olé)

R: Why don't you let me point out where I can best use your help.

I: Are you sure you in the best position to know?

(laughter)

I: I'mo leave you alone, girl. Ask me what you want to know. Tempus fugit, baby.

(laughter)

The folk label for the kind of talking engaged in by I is rapping, defined by Kochman as "...a fluent and lively way of talking characterized by a high degree of personal style," which may be used when its function is referential or directive -- to get something from someone or get someone to do somthing. The interchange is laced with innuendo -- signifying because it alludes to and implies things which are never made explicit.

The utterance which initiated the conversation was intended from all indications as a compliment and was accepted as such. The manner in which it was framed is rather stylized and jocularly effusive, and as such makes

the speaker's remarks less bold and presumptuous and is permissive of a response which can acknowledge the compliment in a similar and jokingly impresonal fashion. The most salient purpose of the compliment was to initiate a conversation with a strange woman. The response served to indicate to the speaker that he was free to continue, probably any response (or none at all) would not have terminated his attempt to engage the hearer, but the present one signaled to the speaker that it was appropriate to continue in his original style. The factor of the audience is crucial, because it obliges the speaker to continue attempting to engage the addressee once he has begun. The speaker at all points has a surface addressee, but the linguistic and nonlinguistic responses of the other two young men indicate that they are very aware of being integral participants in this interchange. The question "Is your husband married?" is meant to suggest to the hearer, who seeks to turn down the speaker's advances by pleading marital ties, that such bonds should not be treated as inhibitory except when one's husband has by his behavior shown similar inhibition.

The speaker adjusts his <u>rap</u> to appeal to the scholarly leanings of his addressee, who responds by suggesting that he is presently engaging in his area of virtuosity. <u>I</u> responds to this left-handed compliment by pointing

out that the researcher is engaging in the same kind of speech behavior and is apparently an experienced player of the game - "I' ain't heard you stutter yet." - which is evidenced by her unfaltering responses. At the same time he notes the narrowness of the speaker's interests, and states the evidence leading him to the conclusion that there must be gaps in her knowledge. He benevolently offers his aid. His maneuvers are offensive and calculated to produce defensive responses. His repeated offers of aid are intended ironically. A member of the audience interjects "Talk that talk!" This phrase is frequently used to signal approval of some speaker's virtuosity in using language skillfully and colorfully and, moreover, language which is appropriate and effective to the social context. The content of the message is highly directive but the speaker indicates by many paralinguistic cues, particularly a highly stylized leer, that he does not expect to be taken seriously; he is parodying a tête à tête and not attempting to engage the hearer in anything other than conversation. He is merely demonstrating his ability to use persuasive language. He is "playing a game," and he expects his addressee and audience to recognize it as such. He signals that the game is over by saying, "I'mo leave you alone" and redirects the conversation. The juxtaposition of the lexical items, which typically

are not paired, is meant to evoke more humor by the dissonant note it strikes.

Another tactic of the signifier is to allude to something which somehow has humor value or negative import for the hearer in a casual fashion -- information dropping.

(9) Thelma, these kids look more and more like their fathers every day. (Signifying about the fact that the children do not all have the same father.)

(10) What time is it? (May in certain contexts be taken to mean, its time for go to go. It will be said that the person was signifying that its time to go home.)

(11) Who was that fox (pretty girl) I saw you with last night. Sure wish you'd introduce me to her. (Signifying: I saw you with a woman who was not your wife.) If said in the presence of the addressee's wife this kind of signifying is felt to have a highly malicious intent, because it drops information which is likely to involve negative consequences for the addressee.

(12) I: Man, when you gon pay me my five dollars?

II: Soon as I get it.

I: (to audience) Anybody want to buy a five dollar nigger? I got one to sell.

II: Man, if I gave you your five dollars, you wouldn't have nothing to signify about.

I: Nigger, long as you don't change, I'll always have me a subject.

3.4 The directive aspect of signifying

The kind of signifying discussed above, involving metaphoric reference and metaphorical significance, may be directive as measured against either the speaker's intent or the effect it causes. The most obvious cases are those in which metaphoric reference is used to insult or provoke a confrontation with the hearer, and such intent is realized by the hearer's taking umbrage. This sort of signifying might also be considered directive when the hearer recognizes such intent, but the goal is not realized because the hearer chooses for some reason not to be engaged. We are considering here the component referred to as ends in Hymes' etic framework, "...ends in view (goals, purposes) and ends as outcomes." (1967:22)

At the age seven or eight I encountered what I believe is a version of the tale of the "Signifying Monkey." In this story a monkey reports to a lion that an elephant has been maligning the lion and his family. This stirs the lion into attempting to impose sanctions against the elephant. A battle ensues in which the elephant is victor and the lion returns extremely chafed at the monkey. In this instance, the recounting of this story is a case of signifying for directive purposes. I was sitting on the stoop of a neighbor who was telling me about his adventures as a big game hunter in Africa, a favorite tall-tale topic, unrecognized by me as tall-tale at the time. A

neighboring woman called to me from her porch and asked me to go to the store for her. I refused, saying that my mother had told me not to, a lie which Mr. Waters recognized and asked me about. Rather than simply saying I wanted to listen to his stories, I replied that I had refused to go because I hated the woman. Being presured for a reason for my dislike, and sensing Mr. Water's disapproval, I countered with another lie, "I hate her because she say you were lazy," attempting, I suppose, to regain his favor by arousing ire toward someone else. Although I had heard someone say that he was lazy, it had not been this woman. He explained to me that he was not lazy and that he didn't work because he had been laid-off from his job and couldn't find work elsewhere, and that if the lady had said what I reported, she had not done so out of meanness but because she didn't understand. Guilt-ridden, I went to fetch the can of Milnot milk. Upon returning, the tale of the "Signifying Money" was told to me, a censored prose version in which the monkey is rather brutally beaten by the lion after having suffered a similar fate in the hands of the elephant. I liked the story very much and righteously approved of its ending, not realizing at the time that he was <u>signifying</u> at me. Mr. Waters reacted to my response with a great deal of amusement. It was several days later in the context of retelling the tale to another child that I understood its

timely telling. My apology and admission of lieing were met by affectionate humor, and I was told that I was finally getting to the age where I could "hold a conversation," i.e., understand and appreciate implications.

There are, of course, other messages which may intend to bring about some action on the part of the hearer and often succeed in doing so. The directive dimension of signifying seems most relevant to native speakers when intent (goals) is agressive and outcome is bellicose and involves a third party. In this connection, there is a kind of speech act which is labelled signifying which does not necessarily involve metaphoric reference. Such speech acts are labeled signifying because ends are salient (although implicit), and the message involves a party other than speaker and addressee. Ends are measured against the message's inherent potential to bring about certain effects or from the actual outcome, if know. These effects theoretically involve the ensuance of some kind of ill-will, agression or disturbance in the relationship between, not speaker and addressee, but addressee and some third party. This is a special category of signifying which does not have a separate label but which is a type distinguished from others by native speakers. It is thus not ends alone which differentiate this form from others, but ends which are actually or potentially bellicose, paired with the

speakers intention to direct agression toward a third party. This is the proverbial signifying of the narrative poem "The Signifying Monkey".*

One of the most interesting points brought up by informants in reference to this kind of signifying was that this tactic was highly ineffectual in realizing its goal. It fails chiefly because the hearer recognizes the message as signifying. It is said that the individual who allows himself to be led by such a tactic would have to be naive, gullible and foolish to an uncommon degree.

In the metaphorical type of signifying, the speaker attempts to transmit his message indirectly and it is only by virtue of the hearers defining the utterance as signifying that the speaker's intent (to convey a particular message) is realized. In third-party signifying, the speaker may realize his aim only when the converse is true, that is, if the addressee fails to recognize the speech act as signifying. In the toast summarized above, the monkey succeeds in goading the lion into a rash act because the lion does not define the monkey's message as signifying.

According to Abrahams, "It is significant that the monkey is child-like, and for his signifying he gets

*See Abrahams for texts

killed in many endings to this toast." (1964:55) The monkey's behavior and the child's behavior may have something in common, but seeing too much of the child in the monkey would seem to pose a rather bizarre moral order -- if there is a moral to the story. From the point of view of informants, the monkey is wily, contriving and villainous, traits not ordinarily associated with children. The monkey is frequently allowed to triumph in this tale, even to the extent of duping the lion a second time. If childishness is to figure in the tale, the lion's behavior would seem to parody that of a child more accurately. The lion is victimized, as it were, because he is too credulous. He fails to consider guile and duplicity. His naive view of the world is responsible for his failure or inability to sensibly process intent. He is an innocent and does not operate with basic adult assumptions.

While most Black people would agree that the monkey's behavior is villainy of the worst sort, if any vicarious identification were to occur, it would tend to be with the monkey and certainly not the lion; a tendency which Abrahams notes in quoting informants as saying, "Signifying is the niggers occupation." The lion is a fool, and it is not so much that he gets his just desserts, but that he is a puppet who moves when his strings are pulled.

He wins an occasional battle, but he does so mindlessly.

This poem is sometimes recited as an allegory; the animals representing racial types. The monkey may be portrayed as Black or White and similarly the lion. When both monkey and lion are Black, they are not of a kind in other respects.

There seems something of symbolic relevance from the perspective of language in this poem. The monkey and lion do not speak the same language; the lion is not able to interpret the monkey's use of language, he is an outsider, un-hip, in a word. To anyone in the know, the monkey's intent should be transparent. If the lion were hip, he could not have been duped.

We are never told whether the elephant was actually guilty of the slander reported, but this seems of no importance. Truth or falsity does not lift the asocial taint from the monkey's behavior. For the most part, the monkey is not seen as motivated by a grudge against either the elephant or the lion -- he is stirring up trouble for its own sake. For this reason, he is an adversary to be feared because, not possessing human motives, his intent is relatively more difficult to process. No matter how much his deeds are condemned, however, there is a touch of admiration for his skill and cunning and a touch of disdain for his victim.

Informants tend not to see themselves as potential victims of this kind of verbal behavior and categorize those who permit themselves to be goaded by hearsay as fools. The mere reporting of calumny should be sufficient grounds for suspecting the motives of the speaker. Having grounds to suspect motive should also lead one to question truth value. Crucially, however, because of the potential such reporting has for causing feuds, one should assume that the signifier's goal is to do just that. The outcome of a feud being unpredictable, the signifier is setting the stage for a confrontation which could lead to serious consequences for either party or both. Jeopardizing both parties, at best he is indifferent to the welfare of both. It is the signifier who should be the target of righteous indignation, if any.

When asked if all victims of signifying were fools, an informant felt this to be the case, although she objected to the connotation of victim. She felt that what makes signifying work is underlying animosity on the part of the hearer toward the third party. The hearer must be disposed to believe that the remarks attributed to the third party were actually said. Thus a necessary condition for <u>signifying</u> to achieve its goal is a state of ill-will, in which, according to informants, the reported message is used as an excuse for a confrontation,

and is no more than a precipitating cause.

When signifying takes the form of the speaker's reporting slander alleged to a third party, it is frequently assumed that his ends (goals) are directive. If ends are read from the perspective of outcomes, the hearer most commonly will read the directive intent and the speaker may be the target of ire. If, however, the alleged slanderer becomes the focus of indignation, there is an implication that the hearer has negative affect for him. While some individuals who engage in this kind of signifying are said to have much in common with the monkey -- their motivations seemingly inexplicable -- actual accounts render the signifier far less enigmatic. The signifier is commonly characterized as motivated by animosity or envy, negatively valued but nevertheless very human traits. Not all "tale bearing" is called signifying. In fact, labeling a speech act signifying appears to be a function of the hearer's knowing or suspecting ill-will on the part of the speaker toward either himself or the third party.

In this kind of signifying, indirection derives from a hearer's attributing implicit directive intent to a speaker's message. The message must have inherent potential for either causing a disturbance in the relationship between the hearer and a third party, or creating

ill-will on the hearer's part for the third party. The overwhelming sentiment toward such remarks and the speaker is resentment.

3.5 Signifying as a form of verbal art

We have discussed some of the art characteristics of signifying in an attempt to adequately describe and define this speech act. All other conditions permitting, a style which has artistic merit is more likely to be selected than one which does not, because of positive cultural values assigned to the skillful use of speech. We would like to examine briefly the artistic characteristics of signifying.

No attempt will be made here to formulate an all-encompassing definition of art. That we may differ in our conceptions of art is made patently clear, for example, by Abrahams summarizing statement that signifying is "... many facets of the smart-alecky attitude." (1964: 54) That our appreciation differs has, more than likely, been communicated in these pages. For our purposes, what is art is simply what native speakers judge witty, skillful and worthy of praise. This is a working definition at best. It nevertheless serves to limit our field of discourse and, more importantly, to base our judgments on the native speaker's own point of view.

It is true that poor attempts at signifying exist.

That these attempts are poor art rather than non-art is clear from comments with which some of them are met. Needless and extreme circumlocution is considered poor art. In this connection, Labov has similar comments about sounding (1968:Vol. II). He cites peer group members as reacting to some sounds with such metalinguistic responses as "That's phony." and "That's lame." Signifying may be met with similar critical remarks. Such failures, incidentally, are as interesting as the successes, for they provide clues as to the rules by violating one or more of them while, at the same time meeting other criteria.

One of the defining characteristics of signifying is its indirect intent or metaphorical reference. This indirection appears to be almost purely stylistic. It may sometimes have the function of being euphemistic or diplomatic, but its art characteristics remain in the forefront even in such cases. Without the element of indirection, a speech act could not be considered signifying.

Indirection means here, that the correct semantic (referential interpretation) or signification of the utterance cannot be arrived at by a consideration of the dictionary meaning of the lexical items involved and the syntactic rules for their combination alone. The apparent significance of the message differs from its

real significance. The apparent meaning of the sentence signifies its actual meaning.

Meaning conveyed is not apparent meaning. Apparent meaning serves as a key which directs hearers to some shared knowledge, attitudes, and values or signals that reference must be processed metaphorically. The words spoken may actually refer to this shared knowledge by contradicting it or by giving what is know to be an impossible explanation of some obvious fact. The indirection, then, depends for its decoding upon shared knowledge of the participants, and this shared knowledge operates on two levels.

It must be employed, first of all, by the participants in a speech act in the recognition that signifying is occurring and that the dictionary-syntactical meaning of the utterance is to be ignored. Secondly, this shared knowledge must be employed in the reinterpretation of the utterance. It is the cleverness used in directing the attention of the hearer and audience to this shared knowledge upon which a speaker's artistic talent is judged.

Topic may have something to do with the artistic merit of an act of signifying. Although practically any topic may be signified about, some topics are more likely to make the overall act of signifying more appreciated.

Sex is one such topic. For example, an individual offering an explanation for a friend's recent grade-slump quipped, "He can't forget what happened to him underneath the apple tree." implying that the young man was preoccupied with sex at this point in his life and that the preoccupation stemmed from the relative novelty of the experience. A topic which is suggested by on-going conversation is appreciated more than one which is peripheral. Finally, an act of signifying which tops a preceding one, in a verbal dueling sense, is especially appreciated.

Kochman cites such an example in the context of a discussion of rapping: "A man coming from the bathroom forgot to zip his pants. An unescorted party of women kept watching him and laughing among themselves. The man's friends hip (inform) him to what's going on. He approaches one woman -- 'Hey, baby, did you see that big Cadillac with the full tires, ready to roll in action just for you?' She answers, 'No, mother-fucker, but I saw a little gray volkswagen with two flat tires.'" As mentioned earlier, signifying may be a tactic used in rapping, defined by Kochman as "..a fluent and lively way of talking, always characterized by a high degree of personal style." (1969:27)

Verbal dueling is clearly occurring; the first act of signifying is an indirect and humorous way of refer-

ring to shared knowledge -- the women have been laughing at the man's predicament. It is indirect in that it doesn't mention what is obviously being reffered to. The speaker has cleverly capitalized on a potentially embarrassing situation by taking the offensive and at the same time, displaying his verbal skill. He emphasizes the sexual aspect of the situation with a metaphor that implies power and class. He is however, as Kochman says, "capped." The woman wins the verbal duel by replying with an act of signifying which builds on the previous one. The reply is indirect, sexual and appropriate to the situation. In addition, it employs the same kind of metaphor and is, therefore, very effective.

The use of mother-fucker is a rather common term of address in such acts of verbal dueling. The term nigger also is common in such contexts. For example: "Nigger, it was a monkey one time wasn't satisfied till his ass was grass." and "Nigger, I'm gon be like white on rice on your ass."

These two examples are illustrative of a number of points of good signifying. Both depend on a good deal of shared cultural knowledge for their correct semantic interpretation. It is the intricacy of the allusion to shared knowledge that makes for the success of these speech acts. The first refers to the toast, "The Signifying

Monkey." The monkey signified at the lion until he got himself in trouble. A knowledge of this toast is necessary for an interpretation of the message. "Until his ass was grass." can only be understood in the light of its common use in the speech of members of the culture -- meaning, until he was beaten up and occurs in such forms as "His ass was grass and I was the lawnmower." What this example means is something like: you have been signifying at me and like the monkey, you are treading on dangerously thin ice. If you don't stop, I am likely to become angry and beat you!

"Nigger, I'm gon be like white on rice on your ass." is doubly clever. A common way of threating to beat someone is to say, "I'm gonna be all over your ass." And how is white on rice? -- all over it. Metaphors such as these may loose their effectivness over time due to overuse. They lose value as clever wit.

The use of the term <u>nigger</u> in these examples is of interest. It is often coupled with the use of code features which are farthest removed from SE. That is, the code utilizes many linguistic markers which differentiate Black speech from SE or White speech. Frequently, more such markers than might ordinarily appear in the language of the speaker are used. Interestingly, the use of the term <u>nigger</u> with other BE markers has

the effect of "smiling when you say that." The use of SE with nigger, in the words of an informant is "The wrong tone of voice." and may be taken as abusive.

It would seem that the use of these terms and this style of language serve the same function. They both serve to emphasize that BE is being used and that what is being engaged in is a Black speech act. This serves a function other than simply emphasizing group solidarity. It signals to the hearer that this is an instance of Black verbal art and should be interpreted in terms of the subcultural rules for interpreting such speech acts.

Such features serve to define the style being used, indicate its tone, and to describe the setting and participants as being appropriate to the use of such an artistic style. Further, such features indicate that it should be recognized that a verbal duel is occurring and that what is said is meant in a joking, perhaps also threatening, manner. A slight switch in code may carry implications for other components in the speech act. Because verbal dueling treads a fine line between play and real agression,it is a kind of linguistic activity which requires strict adherence to socio-linguistic rules. To correctly decode the message, a hearer must be finely tuned to values which he observes in relation to all other components of the speech act. To do so he must

rely on his conscious or unconscious knowledge of the socio-linguistic rules attached to this usage. Meaning, often assumed by linguists to be signaled entirely through code features, is actually dependent upon a consideration of other components of a speech act (cf. Gumperz 1964:196). A remark taken in the spirit of verbal dueling may, for example, be interpreted as insult by virtue of what on the surface seems to be merely a minor change in personnel, or a minor change in topic. Crucially, paralinguistic features must be made to appropriately conform to the rules. Change in posture, speech rate, tone of voice, facial expression, etc., may signal a change in meaning. The audience must also be sensitive to these cues. A change in meaning may signal that members of the audience must shift their responses and that metalinguistic comments may no longer be appropriate.

It is this focus in Black culture -- the necessity of applying sociolinguistic rules, in addition to the frequent appeal to shared background knowledge for correct semantic interpretation -- that accounts for some of the unique character and flavor of Black speech. There is an elaboration of the ability to carefully and skillfully manipulate other components of the speech act in relation to code to signal meaning, rather than pure syntactic and lexical elaboration (cf. Gumperz 1969).

3.6 Summary

Signifying is defined by message form and function. All messages involve a topic and a function. If we examine the social rules which govern the use of the message form, we find that they relate to the topic and ends of the message and not to the form itself. That is to say, if the topic is permissive of joking, and the goal is appropriate to the setting and the participants, this message form is appropriate. In instances where such harmony obtains, this message form adds an intensity or potency factor to the component defined by Hymes as ends. The same is true when topic and ends are judged inappropriate to setting and participants. Thus, if the goal is to make an observation which has humor value and this outcome obtains, the joke is more effective, funnier. If the outcome finds the hearer insulted, signifying causes the insult to be more grave. Key is used here, following Hymes, as the tone or spirit in which signifying is taken and relates to the goals hearers and audience attribute to the speaker. Such goals are governed by rules of usage which dictate how particular ends may be appropriately realized and under what circumstances a given purpose is socially acceptable. Thus, if it is inappropriate for a fifteen year old boy

to accuse his mother of lying, it is also inappropriate for him to imply she is lying. With regard to topics to which some form of taboo is attached, signifying, due to its metaphorical reference, may represent an attempt to be deliberately euphemistic. In such cases, where taboo is not absolute, the use of signifying may remove the taboo stigma.

The form of signifying, in which the speaker's disguised directive intent is considered an effort to disturb relations between addressee and a third party, is considered a highly antisocial act and, in the context of everyday social interaction, is taboo. It may be met by calculated coldness on the part of the addressee or a more active form of censure, depending on temperament.

It may however, be employed as a technique in verbal dueling, where the emphasis is recognizably game behavior. Verbal dueling is essentially a kind of speech event, in which a variety of speect acts may be performed competitively, including signifying, sounding and playing the dozens, where competition is apparent and the goal is essentially to get the better of another individual verbally (cf. Labov 1968; Abrahams 1964). As a speech event it occurs, if not exclusively between males, almost so. This is not to say that no woman ever engages in such speech acts as sounding or playing the dozens, but when they

are typically not in the context of the speech event verbal dueling. Because verbal dueling permits a great deal of license (not absolute in any sense), women cannot be suitably competitive because other social norms require more circumspection in their verbal behavior.

Verbal joking behavior has a high frequency of occurrence among solidary Blacks. By joking behavior we mean simply, teasing and ridicule, which override in many respects norms of politeness which operate in other non-joking contexts. In the context of joking behavior, remarks, which might ordinarily find a hearer taking umbrage, are taken in good sport in accordance with expectation. Signifying frequently occurs in such contexts, as mentioned earlier, and tends to make joking more effective, chiefly due to the artistry involved in metaphorical reference. Metaphorical reference would never be any individuals primary, or even predominant, means of conveying meaning and has the status of an artistic variant more than anything else.

3.7 Loud-talking

The term loud-talking is applied to a speaker's utterance which by virtue of its volume permits hearers other than the addressee, and is objectional because of this. Loud-talking requires an audience and can only

occur in a situation where there are potential hearers other than the interlocutors. It may take the form of a statement, question, or imperative, or a response to any of these and may be delivered at low, normal or high volume, requiring only overhearing.

What to say, what not to say and what should be said privately are decisions commonly made on the basis of the semantic content of the message; one is expected to exhibit sensitivity and an awarness of the appropriate in this regard. The loud-talker breaches norms of discretion, his strategy is to use the factor of audience to achieve some desired effect on his addressee. Loud-talking often has the effect of signalling unequivocally the intent of the speaker from the perspective of the addressee. That is to say, it assures that intent will be imputed beyond the surface function of the utterance which might be to seek information, make a request, an observation or a reply to any of these.

The presence of an audience (overhearers) may act as a deciding factor in the addressee's interpretation of whether, for example, some utterance is an expression of compassion and sympathy or a "catty" remark. "I'm sorry to hear that you and Bill are separated." may be taken in the former spirit when the addressee is the only potential hearer, but when an audience is present,

such a remark may be felt to be mean and malicious. It is as if the audience factor causes the addressee to reject the harmless interpretation of intent while, at the same time, rendering more opprobious the real intent because it itensifies its effect. Loud-talking serves as a key to the interpretation of ends.

An accusation of loud-talking carries the implication that the speaker (loud-talker) has, by his remarks, trod on some taboo area. It may be taboo solely due to the presence of an audience, or it may be reproachable under any circumstances, in which case, the audience factor compounds the effrontery. The remark is tactless because it divulges some information the addressee does not wish to be made public or comments in some negative way about the speaker or his private affairs, causing him discomfort and embarrassment.

Except in the context of joking behavior, it is defined as a hostile and agressive speech act which violates social conventions where shared expectations are taken for granted. Thus, when it occurs, it is assumed to be deliberate and with malice aforethought. When an individual has been the victim of loud-talking, his aggravation derives from, and is intensified by, the fact that he has been made vulnerable through exposure.

The fact that the remark has functioned to expose in some way serves to define it as offending and, in addition, magnifies the offense. Although its effect may be shattering on the addressee, this tactic frequently serves to insure some form of retaliation as a face-saving device, no matter how passive and non-interfering the audience.

Whispered communications often signal to an addressee that the speaker does not wish to be overheard. When an addressee permits his response to be overheard, making it possible for those present to infer the content of the remark the speaker has signalled should be kept private, he is loud-talking his interlocutor. Such a response may occur not as a provocation but as a sanction to censure the original remark, which perhaps has been felt to be impertinent. When an audience hears a huffy "I don't know" or an indignant "None of your business", it is usually clear that some offense, prying in this case, has been committed and is being censured. Such a sanction carries the further implication that the transgression was so great as to require no diplomacy, creating an aura of justified indignation.

In a classroom situation, a student upon completing an assignment had begun reading a novel when he noticed that a neighbor had turned his paper over and was copying

his answers. He turned to the young lady and at a volume sufficiently loud to enable all those present to overhear said, "What are you doing, girl?" The young lady retorted angrily, "You didn't have to loud-talk me." attempting to imply that he too had violated a norm. The circumstances were such that the speaker could have avoided both having his work copied and exposing the transgressor with a minimum of effort. It was therefore apparent that his desire to censure and expose his addressee at least equalled his desire to protect his work. The result was that everyone in the class got a laugh at the young lady's expense.

Loud-talking may be used, for example, when an individual is the focus of undesired attention. If polite and discreet requests to cease the annoyance have been ineffectual, the victim may resort to a retort or reply which will not only make known to all present that he is being pestered, but also the issue involved.

An informant reported that after having been the repeated focus of the unwanted and offensive attention of a middle-aged man she no longer felt any necessity to be polite and responded to an advance in a voice audible to others present saying, "Mr. Williams, you are old enough to be my father. You ought to be ashamed of yourself." This served not only to communicate to the

audience (which had probably perceived Mr. William's intent) that he was being unsuccessful, but to make his effrontery public, which assured an end to the annoyance.

To loud-talk is to assume an antagonistic posture toward the addressee. When it is used to censure, it reveals not only that the loud-talker has been aggrieved in some way, it also indicates, by virtue of making the delict public, that the speaker is not concerned about the possibility of permanently antagonizing his addressee. It is therfore revealing of the speaker's attitude toward the addressee. Although such a breach is not irreversible, one would not ordinarily loud-talk an individual one liked. Whether it occurs as a provocation or a sanction, it frequently serves to sever friendly relations if they were held theretofore.

When a speaker uses the presence of an audience to add persuasive pressure, it may also be said that he is loud-talking. This may occur when a speaker is trying to direct an addressee to do something that he is not disposed to doing, but the reasonableness of the request, for example, may put the hearer in somewhat of a bad light if he refuses. The factor of audience adds persuasive pressure because it compounds the loss of face engendered by the refusal.

Loud-talking may occur in a context to expose the

the failure of the addressee to fulfill some obligation. A young man of seventeen years recounted an event where this form of loud-talking generated a violent confrontation in which he shot a peer, leading to his subsequent detention for several years. Although he does not describe his initiation of the encounter as loud-talking, it appears that his addressee did just that. Larry reported that he had loaned several dollars to a young man whom he did not know well at the request of a mutual friend. On the occasion that he next saw the fellow, several months later, he requested repayment. There was a rather large audience present, including several young girls who were accompanying the debtor. Larry apparently made no attempt to be circumspect saying, "When you gon give me my money, man?" This accusation of being beholden in the context severed to raise Larry's status at the expense of loss of face on his addressee's part. Larry notes that at this point the fellow began loud-talking him -- ".. showing off for a bunch of girls." The response elicited was a stream of verbal abuse and epithets causing loss of face for our protagonist and, unfortunately, escalated the conflict. The alleged debtor made a gesture toward his pocket and Larry reacted by drawing a pistol and shooting him twice. Altercations between males are not uncommon when an individual has

been made to loose face via loud-talking, although the former may be atypical in its degree of physical violence.

Labov mentions the term louding in the context of verbal interaction between teenagers, describing it as a style where loud comments are made by a speaker about or to some individual in order to exert social pressure on the subject. This use seems very much related to the one described here.

An accusation of loud-talking symbolizes that some norm of social interaction has been violated, a norm relating to discretion which must be observed with regard to the content of messages. The boundaries with regard to what is permissible and what is taboo vary according to the social situation, topic, participants and characteristics of the group. The addressee may, dependent on the interplay of these components, define the speech act as rude, in poort taste or on the extreme, real provocation. The kinds of sanctions which are likely to be employed relate also to the factors of the speech event. Except in the context of joking, a teenage boy may feel that the loss of face resulting from loud-talking requires physical engagement, if he can find no suitable verbal response. An adult might respond to loud-talking with a retort in kind or merely with a cold rebuff.

A speech act may be defined as both *signifying* and *loud-talking* (see example No. 12 in the section on *signifying*) if the audience is being used to achieve an end. When some norm operates to exclude *signifying* or *loud-talking*, a simple accusation of *engaging* in these behaviors may be sufficient censure for the individual violating the norm and, to some degree, puts the offending party in a position of losing face.

3.8 *Marking*

A common Black narrative tactic in the folk tale genre and in accounts of actual events is the individuation of characters through the use of direct quotation. When a narrator, in addition to reproducing the words of individual actors, affects the voice and mannerisms of the speakers, he is using the style referred to as *marking*.* *Marking* is essentially a mode of characterization. The marker attempts to report not only what was said, but the way it was said, in order to offer implicit comment on the speaker's background, personality, or intent. Rather than introducing personality or character traits in some summary form, such information is conveyed by reproducing or sometimes inserting aspects of speech ranging from phonological features to particular content which carry expressive value. The above dictionary entry

*Clearly related to SE *mocking*

meaning in the message of the marker is signalled and revealed by his reproduction of such things as phonological or grammatical peculiarities, his preservation of mispronounced words or provincial idioms, dialectal pronunciation and, most particularly, paralinguistic mimicry.

The marker's choice to reproduce such features may reflect only his desire to characterize the speaker. It frequently signifies, however, that the characterization itself is relevant for further processing the meaning of the speaker's words. If, for example, some expressive feature has been taken as a symbol of the speaker's membership in a particular group, his credibility may come into question on these grounds alone.

The marker attempts to replay a scene for his hearers. He may seek to give the implications of the speaker's remarks, to indicate whether the emotions and affect displayed by the speaker were genuine or feigned, in short to give his audience the full benefit of all the information he was able to process by virtue of expressive or context cues imparted by the speaker. His performance may be more in the nature of parody and caricature than true imitation. But the features selected to overplay are those which are associated with membership in some class. His ability to get his message across, in fact, relies on folk notions of the covariance

of linguistic and non-linguistic categories, combined of course, with whatever special skills he possesses for creating imagery.

The kind of context most likely elicit marking is one in which the marker assumes his hearers are sufficiently like himself to be able to interpret this metaphoric communication. Since there is, more likely than not, something unflattering about the characterization, and the element of ridicule is so salient, the relationship between a marker and his audience is likely to be one of familiarity and intimacy and mutual positive affect.

An informant quoted a neighbor to give me an appreciation of her dislike for the woman. She quoted the following comment from Pearl in a style carefully articulated in order to depict her as "putting on the dog", parodying gestures which gave the impression that Pearl is preposturously affected: "You know my family owns their own home and I'm just living here temporarily because it is more beneficial to collect the rent from my own home and rent a less expensive apartment." "That's the kind of person she is," my informant added, feeling no need for further explanation. This is, incidentally, a caricature of a social type which is frequently the object of scorn and derision. This quote was delivered

at a pitch considerably higher than was usual for the informant and the words were enunciated carefully so as to avoid loss of sounds and elision characteristic of fluid speech. What was implied was not that the phonological patterns mimicked are to be associated with affectation in a one-one relationship but, that they symbolize affectation here. The marker was essentially giving implicit recognition to the fact that major disturbances in fluency are indices of "monitored" speech. The presence of the features are grounds for the inference that the speaker is engaged in impression management, which is contextually inappropriate. Individuals who are characterized as "trying to talk proper" are frequently marked in a tone of voice which is rather falsetto.

A marker wishing to convey a particular impression of a speaker may choose to deliver a quotation in a style which is felt to best suit what he feels lies underneath impression management or what is obscured by the speaker's effective manipulation of language. In the following example, the marker departs radically from the style of the speaker for purposes of disambiguation. The individuals here, with the exception of S_1, had recently attended the convention of a large corporation and had been part of a group which had been meeting prior to the con-

vention to develop some strategy for putting pressure on the corporation to hire more Blacks in executive positions. They had planned to bring the matter up in a general meeting of delegates, but before they had an opportunity to do so a Black company man spoke before the entire body. S_2 said, "After he spoke our whole strategy was undermined, there was no way to get around his impact on the Whites."

S_1: What did he say?

S_2: (drawling) He said, Ah'm so-o-o happy to be here today. First of all, ah want to thank all you good white folks for creatin so many opportunities for us niggers and ya'll can be sho that as soon as we can git ourselves qualified we gon be filin our applications. Ya'll done done what we been waiting for a long time. Ya'll done give a colored man a good job with the company.

S_1: Did he really say that?

S_3: Um hm, yes he said it. Girl, where have you been. (put down by initimating S_1 was being literal)

S_1: Yeah, I understand, but what did he really say?

S_4: He said, 'This is a moment of great personal pride for me. My very presence here is a tribute to the civil rights movement. We now have ample evidence of the good faith of the company and we must now begin to prepare ourselves to handle more responsible positions. This is a major step forward on the part of the company. The next step is up to us.' In other words, he said just what S_2 said he said. He sold us out by accepting that kind of tokenism.

S_2 attempted to characterize the speaker as an Uncle Tom by using exaggerated stereotyped Southern speech coupled with content that was compromising and denigrating. It would certainly be an overstatement to conclude that southern regional speech is taken by anyone as a sign of being an "Uncle Tom", but there is an historical association with the model of this stereotype being southern.

The characterization of individuals according to the way they speak is of course not peculiar to Black people, although the implicit association of particular ways of speaking with specific social types may be more elaborated than elsewhere.

The parodying of southern regional Black speech may sometimes serve as a device for characterizing a speaker as uneducated or unintelligent, and sometimes it is used to underscore the guilelessness of the speaker.

The marker encodes his subjective reactions to the speaker and is concerned with the expressive function of speech more than its referential function.

Because marking relies on linguistic expression for the communication of messages, it is revealing of attitudes and values relating to language. It frequently conveys many subtletics and can be a significant source of infor-

mation about conscious and unconscious attitudes toward language. An individual, on occasion, may mark a non-Black using exaggerated BE, with the emphasis clearly being on communicating that the subject was uneducated and used non-standard usages. Perhaps more than anything, marking exhibits a finely tuned linguistic awareness in some areas and a good deal of verbal virtuosity in being able to reproduce aspects of speech which are useful in this kind of metaphorical communication.

CONCLUSIONS

The linguistic divergences described here (and in great detail by Labov 1968) have come to have the status of an ethnic dialect, at least in the urban North. While the isolation of structural differences between BE and SE is a fruitful point of departure for any number of studies, this kind of research should not obscure the great underlying similarity between SE and BE.

Dialect mixture is a source of variation for the community as a whole. Many BE and SE referential equivalents exist side by side from very early language acquisition stages, and thus temporal priority for variants is difficult to establish. However, it seems highly unlikely that pre-school children borrow prestige forms from a portion of the community that they have little contact with. The fact that SE speakers might have difficulty decoding BE [Didn't nobody know] should not suggest that a BE speaker experiences difficulty with SE [Nobody knew]. While BE variants may be used more often than SE referential equivalents, the latter, more often than not, also occur in the idiolects of individual speakers, although speakers commonly are not aware of the values of these variants, (i.e., they do not know which variants are standard and which are non-standard).

It is the unhesitating opinion of this writer that, whatever difficulty some BE speakers exhibit in producing

SE variants, there is not a corresponding difficulty in comprehending SE.

Individuals in the Black community monitor in response to what are felt to be prestige norms for particular social contexts. Our use of the term prestige function is somewhat of a departure from the use of Garvin (1964). Garvin discusses the functions of standard languages from a broader perspective. We are concerned here with the function of adherence to defined standard norms -- the fine points which are used to differentiate standard from non-standard usage. From the present perspective, the prestige function is realized through the use of prestige variants and adherence to norms of correctness which form a frame of reference for value judgments of speech. We are focusing on the stratification of variants within a speech community with a standard language. Some variants are assigned more positive valuations due to historical circumstances, which find some variants defined as prestigeful and others as illiterate and uneducated and where prestige stems from adherence to norms of correctness which define the notion of standard as opposed to non-standard or sub-standard.

While the present sample is too small to establish over-all patterns for the entire community, all data suggest that code shifting from casual to formal speech

would be evidenced by a proportionately higher percentage of BE variants in casual as opposed to formal speech. By casual, we mean the style which is characteristic of interaction between family members, used in informal contexts, or between solidary individuals. Formal speech is the speech that is used in formal settings and with more socially distant interlocutors. If we conclude from this evidence that BE is defined by members of the community as inappropriate for formal contexts and enjoys low prestige within the community, we may postulate that the variation exhibited from speaker to speaker stems from at least two factors: (1) Differential access to prestige variants, including different levels of education can account for some of this variation, and (2) Individual speakers may vary in their ability to sustain the prestige norms at will. Without discounting the above as sources of individual variation, there remain a number of factors obscured by this assessment of the linguistic facts alone, namely: By what criteria is prestigeful (good) speech defined?

Within the community, prestige norms appear to be defined by some speakers as speech which is in no way ethnically marked. On the other hand, there are speakers for whom the prestige norm is realized when there are no gross grammatical deviations from SE. Folk attitudes with respect to satisfying either criterion may, and

typically do, deviate from outside assessments. These different emphases suggest that the underlying rules for monitoring to a formal style may be very different. From one perspective, some individuals are insecure about sounding Black, others are insecure about sounding uneducated (using ungrammatical forms). It might be said that all speakers are insecure about making mistakes, but they define these mistakes according to different criteria. For some individuals a mistake may consist solely in using a form that is ethnically marked.

Many individuals express a dislike for southern sounding speech. Individuals differ in their categorization of variants as southern, and variants which are stigmatized as southern, may or may not coincide with the other stigmatized forms. In careful speech we may thus find some individuals concerned with maintaing subject-verb agreement or with avoiding the use of non-standard grammatical forms. On the other hand we find speakers who are concerned not only with the aforementioned kinds of factors but with vowel height in such words as mine, time, high, etc. These differing foci do not appear to stem solely from the failure of some individuals to recognize the entire spectrum of low prestige forms. Individuals in the former category appear to have an awareness that other speakers are concerned with "fine points". An understanding of these differing criteria for good

speech would be difficult, if not impossible, to assess from the linguistic data alone. These differing underlying definitions of good speech have social correlates of different values. On the one hand, there are values which are essentially assimilationist, on the other hand, values which are pluralistic. The pluralistic emphasis also includes an apparent desire for greater conformity to SE. However, it is selective in the sense that it focuses on grammatical deviation and not ethnic indicators.

The use of BE promotes cohesion among Blacks, serving a unifying function and also a separatist function which is most evidenced in a special kind of code switching. It is perhaps not unusual for individuals in any speech community to be sensitive to contextual code switching. Monitoring is a concept which exists in the community but which does not have a label unless it would be "trying to talk proper". Monitoring to SE prestige variants is sometimes defined as trying to be superior and being distant rather than solidary. When an individual is judged to be engaging in out of context monitoring this assessment is sometimes made on rather specific criteria. For example, certain idioms and words pronounced in a SE way strike a hearer as bizarre and unusual.

Perhaps in recognition of the amount of individual variation in non-monitored speech, individuals are fre-

quently judged as monitoring on the basis of the presence of paralinguistic features of monitored speech. Too much monitoring, in contexts where it is not felt to be appropriate, has the effect of ranking individuals as social types who are not particularly admired. An informant explained a neighbor's monitoring in this way: "She think she gon get time off for good behavior." (i.e. She feels that she will be penalized less by the outside world if she does not use BE.) When I suggested that there was some validity to this assumption the informant countered that I had missed the point. She replied to the effect that, while it is legitimate and useful to recognize that language differences are a token of discrimination, one should not be completely taken in and accept outside valuations across the board.

The prestige function and the unifying function of language appear to be in conflict for the community as a whole. It would not be inaccurate to say that BE as a code is devalued by native speakers. Yet, mastery of Black communication style by an individual speaker is not without prestige.

Speakers of BE are often insecure in situations they define as calling for SE. They often suspect their own command of SE. With non-Blacks, this insecurity may cause them to be reluctant to speak.

For example, in this connection, Malcolm X, in his

autobiography, speaks of his own sensitivity and intimidation when put in a position where he felt his language was inappropriate.

> "I became increasingly frustrated at not being able to express what I wanted to convey in letters that I wrote, especially those to Mr. Elijah Muhammad. In the street, I had been the most articulte hustler out there -- I had commanded attention when I said something. But now, trying to write simple English, I not only wasn't articulate, I wasn't even functional. How would I sound writing in slang, the way I would say it, something such as 'Look, daddy, let me pull your coat about a cat, Elijah Muhammad --" (p. 171)

The kind of linguistic insecurity familiar to many working-class Blacks is not simply of a lexical nature. Such in-group linguistic habits may indeed handicap a speaker. The replacement of standard forms with "slang" forms would not seem to involve any major cognitive shift. There are many intra-cultural settings where slang is inappropriate and it is the unusual individual who is handicapped because he does not also possess more conventional lexical alternants.

The most commonly occuring linguistic insecurity stems from cognizance that BE is a low-prestige code.

The stratification of variants in a standard language situation promotes both linguistic diversity and uniformity. Some variants will be emulated by all members of the community at the expense of others, because the use of the prestige variants form a basis for judgments

about the speaker (i.e., good speech-bad speech; educated-illiterate).

Stratification of speech codes, however, imposes a handicap on speakers of low-prestige variants. If a group or subculture accepts the valuations that some variants are "better" than others, insecurity is generated in speakers of the devaluated variants which may handicap them in any number of ways. The individual who belongs to a sub-culture or group whose speech diverges from the standard norm of correctness is in the unfortunate position of having to unlearn stigmatized usages and supplant them with more standard ones. Generally this process of unlearning occurs at an age when speech patterns are firmly entrenched.

Naive attitudes towards the implications of language variation promotes concern in formal education with factors which are very peripheral to the mastery of standard English.

A potential solution to this kind of problem might be the inculcation of linguistic tolerance among educators and the population in general. An awareness that speech valuations are value loaded is a logical prerequisite for an understanding of the nature of the problem.

The teaching that speech habits have complex social correlates is as important as the teaching of Standard

English. The burden of responsibility for linguistic tolerance is an obligation of the community as a whole. Since the value judgments of sub-groups tend to closely parallel those of the wider community and because members of sub-groups must operate both within the context of the sub-culture and wider culture, we cannot presume that members of stigmatized groups alone can transcend linguistic value judgments superimposed by the dominant group.

In the present study I have attempted simply to expose some of the complexities of the subject at hand. Extensive research into the implications of BE is required. In America, Black English and Standard English form a single system of communication and neither can be understood without reference to the other. Models must be developed which examine Black English as a normative alternate to Standard English for a large proportion of members of this society. Analysis must focus of BE both as an expression of imposed pariah status and as a complex representation of a cultural system which not only mirrors the former but serves as a refuge from it.

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APPENDIX I

DISTRIBUTION OF FINITE FORMS OF BE IN THE SPEECH OF RITA

	Subj	Deleted		Contracted		Full	
		is	are	is	are	is	are
[__NP]	A	2	2	10			
	B	2	1	1		8	
	C			23			
[__PA]	A	9	6	11	2	1	
	B			2		7	4
	C			14			
[__gn]	A	3	3	1			
	B						
	C						
[__V+ing]	A	8	10	1	2		
	B	2	1				2
	C			3			
[__Neg]	A		2	6	1		
	B					1	1
	C			5			1

A = Pronoun Subject
B = Other Noun Phrase Subject
C = It, That

Rita	Subj	Deleted		Contracted		Full	
		is	are	is	are	is	are
[__Loc]	A	2		5	2		
	B	1				5	
	C			8			
[__Embedded Sentence]	A						
	B					1	
	C						
[__Temporal Adv]	A					2	
	B						
	C			1			
[__Manner Adv]	A			1			
	B					1	
	C						
[__Embedded Ques]	A			1		1	
	B						
	C			6			
Wh Questions			2				
Yes-No Questions						1	
Clause Final Position						5	1
		56		107		42	

DISTRIBUTION OF FINITE FORMS OF BE IN THE SPEECH OF ESTHER

	Subj	Deleted		Contracted		Full	
		is	are	is	are	is	are
[__NP]	A	2	2	7	3	6	5
	B					3	1
	C			19		1	
[__PA]	A	1	1	9	1	2	
	B		2			4	
	C			13			
[__gn]	A		6	2	4	1	
	B						
	C						
[__V+ing]	A		4	2	3	1	1
	B		1			3	1
	C						2
[__Neg]	A			3	3		
	B						
	C			3			
[__Loc]	A			1			
	B						
	C						1

Esther	Subj	Deleted		Contracted		Full	
		is	are	is	are	is	are
[__Embedded Ques]	A			1		1	
	B					1	
	C			3			
[__Adv Purpose]	A					1	
	B						
	C						
[__Embedded Sentence	A						
	B					3	
	C						
Yes-No Questions							2
Wh Questions				1	2	2	1
Clause Final Position						2	
		19		80		45	

Appendix II

B.E. Sentences

Edited by Four Teen-age Native Speakers

M = Model Sentence

1. M: You know who it was got caught?

   A: Do you know who it was that got caught?
   B: Do you know who it was that got caught?
   C: Do you know who it was that got caught?
   D: Do you know who it was gotten caught?

2. M: He with us.

   A: He is with us.
   B: He is with us.
   C: He is with us.
   D: He is with us.

3. M: I'mo ask the lady next door would she call her on the phone.

   A: I'm going to ask the lady next door if she would call her on the phone.
   B: I'm going to ask the lady next door to call her on the phone.
   C: I'm going to ask the lady next door would she call her on the phone.
   D: I'm going to ask the lady next door will she call her on the phone.

4. M: Go look and see is the door closed.

   A: Go and see if the door is closed.
   B: Go see if the door is closed.
   C: Go look and see if the door is closed.
   D: Go and look and see if the door is closed.

5. M: Ask Barbara did she hear the bell.

   A: Ask Barbara did she hear the bell.
   B: Ask Barbara did she hear the bell.
   C: Ask Barbara did she hear the bell.
   D: Ask Barbara did she hear the bell.

6. M: He asked could I go to the show.

A: He asked if I could go to the show.
B: He asked could I go to the show.
C: He asked could I go to the show.
D: He ask could I go to the show.

7. M: He know how to read cause he go to school.

A: He know how to read because he goes to school.
B: He knows how to read because he goes to school.
C: He knows how to read because he goes to school.
D: He can read because he goes to school.

8. M: He said he don't lie, but he do all the time.

A: He says he don't lie but he do all of the time.
B: He said he doesn't lie but he do all the time.
C: He says he doesn't lie but he does all the time.
D: He said he don't but he does all the time.

9. M: I've live here since I was two.

A: I've lived here since I was two.
B: I have lived here since I was two.
C: I have been living here since I was two.
D: I have live here every since I was two.

10. M: He don't never offer nobody nothing.

A: He doesn't ever offer anyone anything.
B: He doesn't ever offer anyone anything.
C: He never offers anything.
D: He doesn't offer anyone anything.

11. M: When he pass by I always look the other way.

A: When he pass by I always look the other way.
B: When he passes by I look the other way.
C: When he passes by I always look the other way.
D: When he goes by, I look the other way.

12. M: They always runs when they see me.

A: They always run when they see me.
B: They always run when they see me.
C: They always run when they see me.
D: They always run when they see me.

13. M: Most of the time he be looking at magazines.

A: Most of the time he's looking at magazines.
B: Most of the time he looks at magazines.
C: Most of the time he will be looking at magazines.
D: Most of the time he be looking at magazines.

14. M: You looking good.

A: You're looking good.
B: You're looking good.
C: Your looking good.
D: You are looking good.

15. M: He here now.

A: He's here now.
B: He's here now.
C: He is here now.
D: He's here now.

16. M: Everybody not smart.

A: Everyone isn't smart.
B: Everybody isn't smart.
C: Everybody is not smart.
D: Everyone is not smart.

17. M: He be doing that all the time.

A: He does that all of the time.
B: He does that all the time.
C: He been doing it all the time.
D: He does that all the time.

18. M: Mary usually be home by this time.

A: Mary usually be home by this time.
B: Mary usually is home by this time.
C: Mary usually be home about this time.
D: Mary usually does be home about this time.

19. M: He had already wrote the letter.

A: He had already wrote the letter.
B: He had already written the letter.
C: He had already wrote the letter.
D: He has already wrote the letter.

20. M: I seen it first.

A: I seen it first.
B: I saw it first.
C: I seen it first.
D: I saw it first.

21. M: I done finish my exam.

A: I have finished my examine.
B: I have finished my exam.
C: I finished my exam.
D: I have finish my examine.

22. M: Beverly mother in the hospital.

A: Beverly's mother is in the hospital.
B: Beverly's mother is in the hospital.
C: Beverly's mother is in the hospital.
D: Beverly's mother is in the hospital.

23. M: Do it taste good?

A: Do it tastes good?
B: Does it taste good?
C: Does it taste good?
D: Does it taste good?

24. M: He ain't started to get dressed.

A: He haven't started dressing.
B: He hasn't started to dress.
C: He hasn't started to get dressed.
D: He hasn't started to get dress yet.

25. M: Can't nobody jump forty feet.

A: No one can jump 40 feet.
B: Nobody can jump forty feet.
C: Nobody can jump 40 feet.
D: No one can jump 40 feet.

26. M: I ain't never had no trouble with none of them.

A: I haven't had any trouble with any of them.
B: I haven't ever had any trouble with any of them.
C: I have never had any trouble with none of them.
D: I haven't had any trouble with any of them.

27. M: Don't nobody know everything.

A: Nobody doesn't know everything.
B: Nobody knows everything.
C: Nobody doesn't know everything.
D: Everyone don't know everything.

28. M: It's a policeman at the door.

A: It's a policeman at the door.
B: It's a policeman at the door.
C: There is a policeman at the door.
D: There is a policeman at the door.

M: Don't nobody know.*

1: Doesn't nobody know.
2: Nobody don't know.
3: Nobody doesn't know.
4: Nobody knows.
5: No one knows.

*This sentence was used by a member of the class. The five variants listed were produced by members of the class in response to its being written on the blackboard. This incident occurred prior to this test.